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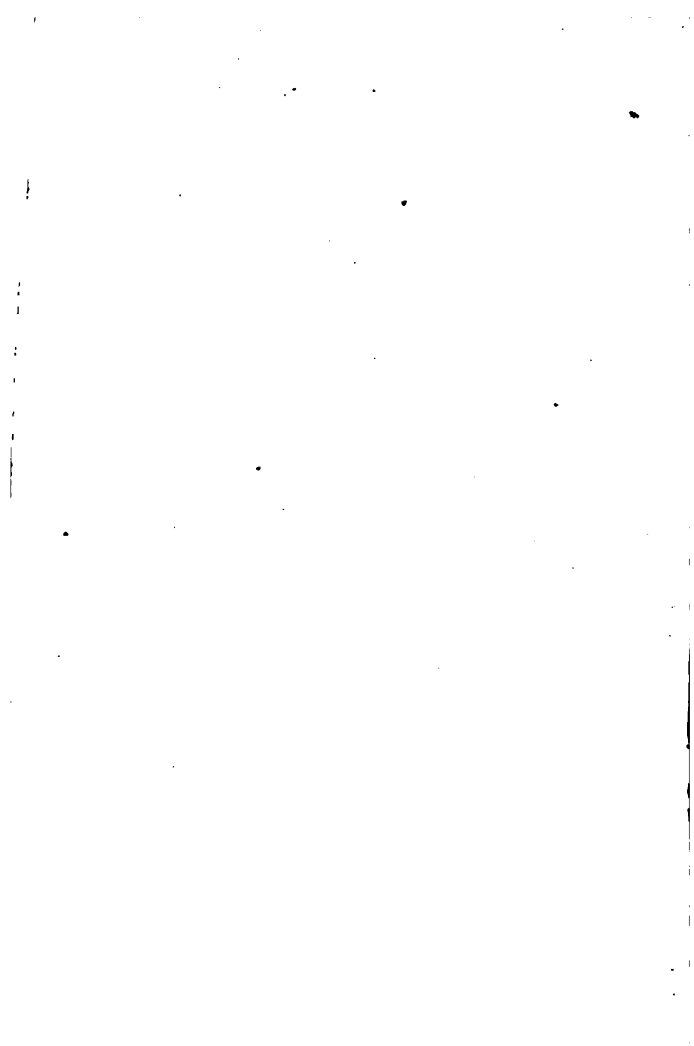
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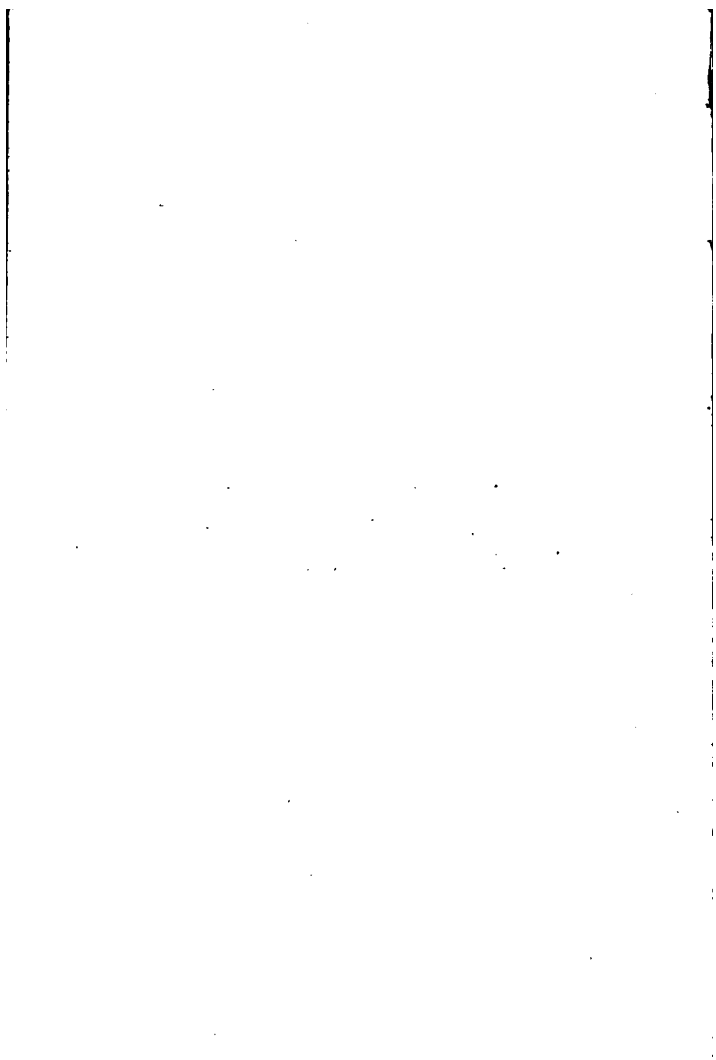








**DEATH-BED SCENES,**  
**AND**  
**PASTORAL CONVERSATIONS.**



# DEATH-BED SCENES,

AND

PASTORAL CONVERSATIONS.

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*THE FOURTH EDITION.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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VOLUME THE THIRD.

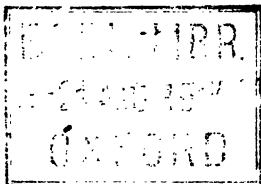
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**P R E F A C E**  
**TO THE**  
**FIRST EDITION OF THE THIRD VOLUME,**  
**BY THE EDITORS.**

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THREE editions of the two antecedent volumes of this work being now nearly exhausted, we may venture, perhaps, to flatter ourselves, that a third volume will not be unacceptable to the clergy, or to the public in general ; but, in sending it forth, we think it proper to announce, that it is not our present intention to publish, after so short an interval, any more of the similar materials in our hands. Many reasons have led us to this determination ; but the chief is, our wish, as some parts of the remaining stories are recent, that time may roll over the characters and transactions, and scatter away the memory of them from the minds of the existing contemporary generation, so as to leave no possibility of an application to individuals.



Of the three stories, which this third volume contains, the second was written concurrently with the action of the piece. We know the fact by the personal concern which we ourselves had in the events that are recorded; but in all the cases in which it happened, we know it by the internal evidence of the manuscripts. When a piece was composed after the whole action was terminated, the Author described his characters, in each particular passage, as they appeared to him upon the general view, without any subsequent alteration; but when he wrote concurrently, he described them as they appeared to him at the moment, in different lights on different occasions; and he was compelled, in consequence, in order to avoid seeming contradictions and inconsistencies, when his opinions of the several characters had undergone a change, to insert numerous corrections and qualifications of the previous history. All such alterations in the original manuscripts (no copy having ever been taken) attest the fact of the concurrent writing.

Several persons having expressed a curiosity to know what guarantee they have for the truth and accuracy of the stories which were composed long after the events, as the first and third in this volume,

and many others undoubtedly were, we can explain this matter to them precisely. When the Author wrote concurrently, he began to write as soon as the transactions appeared to assume sufficient importance; when he wrote subsequently, he selected those transactions only, of which he remembered all the facts as well as peculiar expressions and sentiments, both of his own, and of the persons with whom he conversed. These expressions and sentiments, he called his landmarks; by reflecting upon them, he replaced himself in the same position in which he had been when they were uttered; by degrees he was wrought up into the same feelings, and fell into the same train of thought and argument; and then he had nothing to do but to fill up the intervals, which he probably accomplished without much deviation from the original scene, or, at least, without violating the rules which he mentions in his own preface.

In the recollection of remarkable facts and expressions, he was often materially assisted by our excellent mother; for it was his constant practice to relate everything of that kind to her on the very day of its occurrence, and her memory was tenacious. The mention of this recalls the circumstances of the

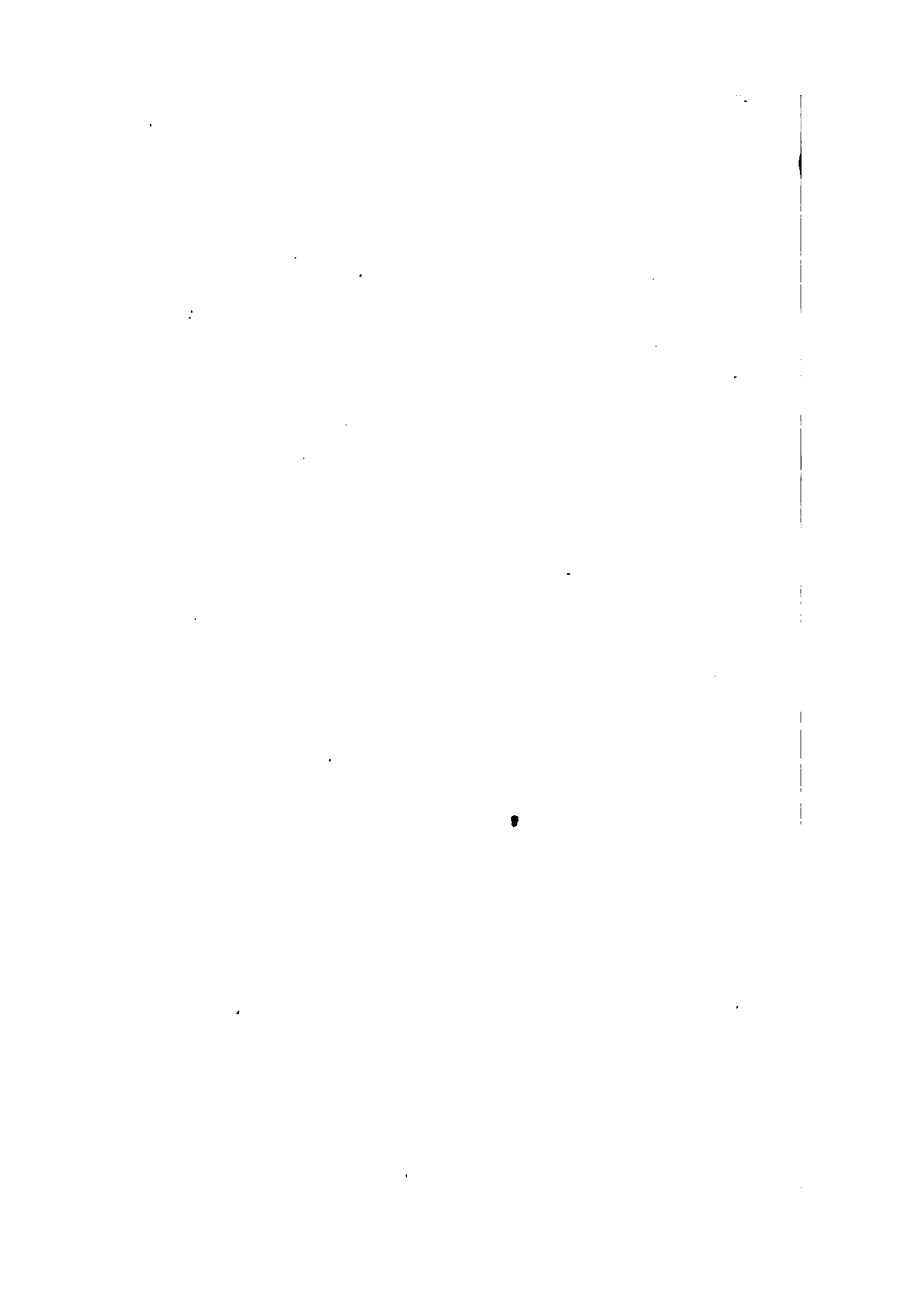
first story which he wrote, and which he entitled 'Parental Anger.' Upon his return from visiting poor old Mr. Broom, he described to her almost immediately the scene in which he had been engaged. It interested her exceedingly; it was short besides; so she pressed him to commit it to paper at once. He had a great antipathy to the manual labour of writing, and on that ground had refused the same request on other occasions; but now, the labour being so small, he was ashamed to refuse any longer. Accordingly, he wrote the story on the covers of letters, not having the most distant idea of ever writing another. It was afterwards copied out upon a fair sheet by one of us, and it is the only story which has had so much trouble bestowed upon it. From that time he wrote always upon the same sheets that have gone to the printer, once for all; and therefore, perhaps, we may justly claim for him the indulgence of a candid criticism.

The reader will now be able to form some judgment of his own, how far he may depend upon these stories. Some persons, as we understand, have declared them to be entirely fictitious; and even eminent clergymen, speaking of them in the most courteous terms, are reported to have said, that they

themselves have not been so fortunate as to meet with any such cases in the course of their own experience. Our only answer shall be to tell them what happened to one of Dr. Warton's curates. He had read the stories in manuscript, and doubted, we believe, whether such conversations ever really occurred; but Dr. Warton being confined by a long sickness, and the whole business of visitation devolving upon this zealous young clergyman, he soon discovered that he had full scope for the employment of every process detailed in those manuscripts. And we remember very well, with what great pleasure our beloved father, unable to stir out himself, received this testimony almost daily from the mouth of his curate.

Thus then, for the present, we take our leave.

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# DEATH-BED SCENES.

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## CHAPTER I.

### MR. MARSDEN—OBDURACY.

#### § 1. *The Marsdens.*

As I was returning home one day from my morning's walk, through the main street of the village, one of our apothecaries ran from his house across the way, and stopped me, to mention to me the extraordinary case of Mr. Marsden, who, as he affirmed, was fast approaching his latter end. This Mr. Marsden was a shopkeeper, in a good way of business; and having plenty of money at command, he resorted continually to the ale-house and gin-shop, and thus reduced himself to the hopeless condition in which he now lay. "But what is extraordinary," said Mr. Benson, "is this: you might suppose that such a man would be glad to live as long as possible; far from it, however; for if so, he would be glad, also, of medical help; but I can never get at him, to do anything for him, except by stratagem or by force. To-day, I have failed in both those methods; and the man, being left to himself, will certainly die very soon, however unfit he may be for it. And now I have told you this fact, and the undoubted speedy consequence, I leave the rest to yourself. You will do what is right, I know." "I will go to him this very

moment," I replied. "I hope he will see you," he said, "but I much fear that he will refuse."

Upon this I turned back immediately, and went to Mr. Marsden's house, which was close at hand, in this very street. His wife, when I entered, was serving some customers in the shop, and she desired me to walk into the back room for a few moments. Here I found their daughter, a pretty young woman, and their only child, out of many, then at home, who curtsied to me as I came in. I questioned her at once about her father's sickness, and the probable danger of it; but she was at first very reserved, and seemed reluctant to talk with me; and I concluded that she felt but little for his melancholy situation. When Mrs. Marsden joined us, she was loquaciously communicative, and made no secret of any thing, but declared, without concealment or palliation, what she conceived to be the cause of her husband's disorder. "He has killed himself with drink, Sir," she said; "there is no doubt of that; but I will say this for him, that he was as sober a man as any in the world, till they chose him for a constable, which took him out of his proper business, and forced him to frequent public houses, where he got those habits of drinking, that have never since left him. But I will go up to him, Sir, and tell him that you are here; he will not see the doctor, if he can help it; and I fear I shall have great difficulty in persuading him to see you, Sir; but I will do my best."

Mrs. Marsden was supposed to be almost as fond of drinking as her poor husband, and her face seemed to betray the indulgence of some propensity of that sort, being marked all over with large red blotches. She was very tall, and excessively thin, as dram-

drinkers generally are, with sharp nose and chin, her cheek bones projecting considerably, and her lips having shrunk away from her teeth. It was evident, however, that she was not quite embroiled by that vice; for she shewed a great desire to take me upstairs, and to give me an opportunity of speaking to the sick man, which implied that she did not wish him to die in his present state.

During her absence, I tried again to enter into conversation with the young woman. "Your poor father," I said, "was, unfortunately, not in the habit of coming to church; did he study the Bible at home?" "No, Sir," she answered now with freedom; "if he could have helped it he would not have suffered such a book in his house. I have got one, Sir, but I am forced to conceal it very carefully. One day he surprised me reading it, and he snatched it out of my hands with great fury, and threw it upon the fire: but my mother saved it for me. To church I have never once been since I left school; I could not go there without very great danger; I believe he would almost kill me." "You are very much to be pitied," I said. "When our duty to God and our duty to our parents seem to be at variance with each other, it is a very painful thing. I have no hesitation, however, in telling you, that if it be clearly made out in any instance that we owe a duty to God, the duty must be performed, in spite of parents, and all the world besides; and even with some risk to ourselves. Would you steal or commit any other crime, if your father ordered you to do so?" "No, Sir," she replied with quickness, "that I never would." "Then you allow," I said, "that in some cases you may disobey a parent, and ought to do so." "Yes, Sir," she



answered, "if he bids me do any thing wicked." "And suppose he should order you," I said, "to abstain from doing something which your duty to God requires you to do, what would you think then? Ought you not to disobey him in that case also?" "I believe there is no difference," she answered. "You are right," I said; "there is none; only, as I mentioned before, the duty must be clearly made out, and we must not pretend a desire of obeying God when we disobey our parents merely to please ourselves. If you did so, you would be guilty of a double sin; the sin of disobeying your parents, and the sin of mocking God, whom you pretend that you wish to serve, whilst all the time you only wish to serve yourself. Do you understand me, young woman?"

"Yes, Sir," she answered, "I understand you very well; but it would be very difficult to know what to do in many cases, and still more difficult to do it." "Consider it," I said, "in this manner,—God bids you do one thing, and your parents bid you do another; the two things are at variance with each other, and cannot both be done; but it does not follow on this account, that your duty to God, and your duty to your parents are at variance, so as to disturb you about your conduct: because your parents may bid you do something unlawful; but it can never be your duty to do anything unlawful, and therefore in all such cases it is not your duty to obey your parents. Again, your parents may bid you do something quite lawful in itself, but the doing of which would prevent you from doing what God bids you; in this case, too, it cannot be your duty to obey your parents. But this case is not so clear as the other, and it will some-

times require a little judgment to decide properly. Suppose they should order you to write a letter, which it would be quite proper for you to write; would it not be your duty to write it, generally speaking?" "Without doubt, Sir," she answered. "But suppose," I said, "they should order you to write it at such a time as to prevent you from going to church; what would you think then?" "I should know, Sir," she replied, "that it was my duty to go to church, but I should fear to do it, and I should be very much troubled." "But your trouble," I said, "would arise, it seems, not from your being ignorant which is your duty; to go to church, or to write the letter; but from your fear of the consequences of doing your duty; is not this so?" "It is," she answered. "Well," I said, "we will talk of *that* fear presently; but now suppose another thing. Suppose they bid you write this letter at a time when you have always been used to pray to God, or to study his holy book; what would you think then?" "Oh! Sir," she replied readily, "I could read, or pray, at some other time." "You are very right," I said; "the obeying your parents in this instance, would not prevent you from obeying God altogether, but only from doing his will at one particular time; a time, too, not appointed by God himself, but chosen by *you* for your own convenience. The case of going to church is different; for the church is open only at set times; and if your parents were to be continually ordering you to do something else at those times, you might obey them now and then, and it might be excusable; but to obey them always, or very often, would be to disregard your duty to God, and your own soul too. If you understand me so far, I will go on."

"I think I do, Sir," she replied; "and I shall be

very glad to hear anything more which may be for my good." "I commend you very much," I said, "for this teachable disposition; and they who wish to learn, deserve to be taught: so I will go on to your fears; for it appears to *me*, that your own good sense will always enable you to know pretty well what is your duty, and what is not. I ask you then which ought you to fear most, God, or your parents?" "God, to be sure," she answered. "And is not *this* the reason," I asked again; "namely, that your parents can only punish your disobedience for a short time, but God can punish it for ever?" "Yes, Sir, *that* is the reason," she replied. "Then," I said, "this settles the question; does it not? It must be a worse thing to be punished for ever, than to be punished for a short time; and of course you will try to avoid that which is the worse." "Yes, Sir," she answered eagerly; "but God is merciful, and might forgive me." "Certainly," I said, "he might, if you had opportunities of repentance; but are you sure of *that*?" "No, indeed," she replied hesitatingly; "*that* is true, Sir; I might die in an instant." "Yes," I said; "and if you disobeyed God, thinking in your own mind that it was a matter of little consequence to do so, because you would afterwards repent, and then he would forgive you; do you suppose that God would approve of such conduct? On the contrary, must he not consider it so great an abuse of his mercy as to deserve most justly to be punished with the utmost rigour?"

As I spoke this with rather a severe tone, the young woman turned pale, and began to tremble; but I should have proceeded to strengthen and enforce the argument notwithstanding, had not the mother at this moment returned to us, exclaiming, "I can

do nothing with him, Sir ; he is so obstinate ; he will not see you at any rate. And would you believe it, Sir, when I left the room, he got up out of bed, and bolted the door after me ?” “ Is he able to do *that* ?” I said with surprise. “ Oh ! yes, Sir,” she answered ; “ his strength is prodigious yet,—why it was only yesterday that he got out of bed, and huddled on some clothes, and stole out of the house ; and where do you think we found him, Sir, at last ?” “ I cannot conjecture,” I said. “ At the alehouse, Sir,” she replied, “ drinking as he used to do, and deeper still.” “ And is he then,” I enquired, “ aware of the doctor’s opinion, that his latter end approaches so fast ?” “ Yes, Sir,” she answered ; “ he knows it very well, but he does not seem to care about it.” “ Oh ! dreadful, dreadful !” I exclaimed, with a mixture of astonishment and horror ; “ and must we leave this wretched man to himself, to perish in his sins, and to go thus unprepared to the terrible judgment ?”

Here the daughter wept, and the mother was not unmoved ; but she said, “ Nothing can be done, Sir, now. We cannot even get into his chamber. But you will be good enough, perhaps, to call again.” “ *That* I will,” I replied, “ in a couple of hours ; but, after what you have told me, I almost despair. Has your daughter any influence over him ?” “ None, Sir,” she answered ; “ none at all ; he has taken a great dislike to her, because she sometimes reads her Bible, and wishes to go to church.” “ Well,” I said, “ you must do what you can to prevail upon him to see me ; and you know how near my house is to yours ; so that you may send for me without difficulty whenever you have a favourable opportunity ; and it cannot be much trouble to *me* to come. I

hope he will relent." "I hope so too," she replied ; and then I hastened away.

I had for some time observed Mr. Marsden's declining state ; his pallid countenance, his haggard eye, and his tottering step ; and what I could not readily account for, he now always passed me without bowing, or touching his hat. The conduct of many others had been just the reverse. In health and strength, and the receipt of good wages, they had a sort of pride in shewing that they dared to treat me without respect ; there was an appearance of an independent spirit in such behaviour, which raised them in their own opinion. But when employment was scarce, or sickness overtook them, they never failed in any points of civility : they gave the wall at the distance of twenty yards, and doffed their hats to the very ground. On these occasions I thought it politic to speak kindly to them, although I knew perfectly well their interested motives ; and sometimes it answered beyond my expectations, and kept them ever afterwards in due allegiance to me. But many were not to be permanently won by any favours ; when their prosperity returned, their ill temper returned with it. Once I had a low bow from a man whom I did not know by name, who had passed me hundreds of times before without noticing me. I stopped him, as there happened to be nobody near us, and put the question directly to him, why he bowed to me now, having so often passed me without doing it ? "Why, Sir," he answered, "I am come to my right senses ; I am very ill ; my wife and children are starving ; and I have reason to see the folly of my former behaviour. I was like one of the rest of them, Sir ; I hated you for your interference with our pleasures

and for speaking to the justices to shut up the public-houses, and turn out the landlords who suffered riotous doings in their premises. But I have had sad time for thinking, and I think differently now. What you did was of no use to yourself, Sir, and could only have been intended for our good ; I see it now, and I honour you for it.”—“ Very well then, my friend,” I said ; “ if God should be so gracious as to restore your health and your wages, instead of going to the alehouse on a Sunday, go to church ; and instead of spending any of your money there, put what you can spare into the saving-bank ; and, in the mean time, read this little book which I have here in my pocket, and which I will give you ; and you will be a better man in future.” At an early opportunity afterwards, I called upon him at his own house, and relieved the wants of his family ; and, although he did not do all that I wished when he recovered from his sickness and resumed his employments, yet he always acknowledged me when we met in the streets, and was kept in very decent order by knowing that my eye was upon him. In this manner great good may be done in a parish if the priest will but seize on the opportunities presented to him. Many will be ungrateful to him ; but many also, and even some of the ungrateful, will be kept within certain bounds, which will add something to the comfort of the parish.

To return to Mr. Marsden :—His conduct was the reverse of that which I have been describing. In his prosperity, he was always civil ; and yet I had had some altercation with him, during the time that he was in the office of constable, which a man of his character was very likely to have resented. I urged

him to perform the duties of that office diligently and conscientiously ; and, at least, to attend to the observance of good order on the Lord's day ; but, like too many others, both before and since, he was extremely averse to any exertion on that day in particular, which he considered to be a day of recreation and amusement after the toils of the week. But his recreations and amusements, unfortunately for him, were not innocent. He was himself the last, on the Sabbath, to quit the alehouse, his pipe, and his glass ; and, by consequence, the last to think of disturbing others who delighted in the same Sabbath occupations. But a neighbouring magistrate having issued a precept, at my request, he was then compelled to bestir himself a little ; however, as he was not cordial in the business, the effect was still less. All this time, as his wife said, he was laying the foundation of the bad habits which destroyed him ; and, I feared, of something still worse,—of radicalism and irreligion, and every other kindred corruption of the mind and heart. When these principles had taken full hold of him, *then*, I conjectured, began his incivilities towards *me* ; and it did not seem that his sickness had made any alteration in his principles or conduct, except, alas ! to harden and brutalize him.

Such was the man whom I was longing to see ; and it was with great joy I heard, upon my return to his house after the two hours, that I was to be admitted into the sick chamber. I had no time to enquire how this had been affected ; for Mrs. Marden led me straight up stairs, without going first to prepare him for my reception ; lest, as she told me, he might have an opportunity of changing his mind. I learned afterwards that it was Mr. Benson who had

procured me this interview ; for, having been admitted himself in the interval, he had reproached the poor man for the impropriety of his behaviour in refusing my attendance ; and, I believe, he had stated also, what was not strictly correct, that the parish-priest had a right to go wherever he wished among the sick, and to perform his duties at his own pleasure.

Being arrived at the door, she opened it, and announced my name ; but I observed that, when I went in, she did not shut it after me ; and I suspected that she intended to remain on the staircase, which turned out to be the fact, whether it was mere curiosity, or a laudable anxiety, that prompted her to do so. If Mr. Marsden had been aware of her stay, I should have been inclined to attribute it to a wish, on her part, to restrain the sick man from making confessions which might involve herself. In the cases of the notoriously wicked, the rest of the family were always extremely unwilling to permit me to be alone with the dying persons ; and, sometimes, the fear of it was so strikingly marked, that I shall never forget the circumstances. What cowards does guilt make of us all ! I will relate a single instance, which distressed me, at the time, beyond measure :—

A woman, of the name of Wheeler, who had but just settled in the parish, was given up by the doctors ; and, being aware of her imminent danger, she was urgent with her husband to call me in to visit her, and prepare her for death. He refused with the most pertinacious and cruel obstinacy, as long as he could ; but, at last, being threatened with curses and imprecations upon his head, if he did not consent, his bold spirit sunk within him, and he gave



way. As I mounted the staircase, I saw him peeping through a door which stood ajar ; and when I had passed that door, and was ascending another flight of steps, he came after me; as it appeared, but did not enter the sick chamber; and then, by speaking loudly to somebody below, he made known to his poor wife and the rest of us, that he was stationed within hearing of all that might be said. I desired that the door might be shut, and that we might have perfect silence for the awful solemnity about to take place; but when one of the women in attendance attempted to obey me, she met with a resistance which she could not overcome, and so she soon desisted, and left the door open. "There is some strange mystery about this family," I thought with myself; "but time, perhaps, will clear it up."

I now came round to the side of the bed where the poor creature was lying. She was immensely large, and seemed to be one entire mass of putrefaction. Not a feature of her face could I distinguish: pustules, swellings, abscesses, red, blue, and black, covered the whole. I should have started back from so loathsome a spectacle with horror and abhorrence, if I had not been repressed by the certainty that, under that disgusting exterior, was hidden a precious immortal soul, for which Christ died, and which might now be saved by my humble ministrations. I addressed myself, therefore, to the sacred, charitable work, with all the zeal and energy of which I was master; but at the same time, with a mixture of gentleness and tenderness, which I soon discovered to be adapted to the case of my afflicted and desponding patient. The guilty husband, however, was unable to restrain his fears, whenever

the conversation with this humble penitent appeared to be approaching towards the confession of some particular sins; and, lest his own crimes should be laid bare, he disturbed us immediately at such moments, by calling to one of the persons in the room, and asking, impatiently, whether the Doctor would never have done; and, at length, when he could bear it no longer, he retired down the stairs to the first landing-place, and summoned me from thence by name, in a most decided tone, to quit his house without delay. I was in amazement, and quite at a loss how to act, from the fear of doing mischief: but nobody else seemed at all surprised, and at last the poor woman herself said, "You had better go, Sir, without making any opposition; and God, I hope, will bless you for what you have done, under such distressing circumstances!" "I will be here again to-morrow, Madam," I answered; "and I trust that I shall be permitted to administer the sacrament to you." "God grant it," she said; and so I left her.

As I descended the stairs, I heard the steps of a person before me, whom I tried to overtake, but in vain; and when I enquired below for Mr. Wheeler, I was told, peremptorily, that he was engaged, and could not speak with me. All I could do, therefore, was to leave a message for him, announcing my intention of a second visit, and the particular object of it; but, alas! in the course of the night, the poor woman died. Very soon afterwards he withdrew from my parish altogether, and the mystery of his conduct was never solved: the suspicion was, that he had been a smuggler, and that his conscience stung him with the recollection of some crime

of deeper dye, which the smuggler, in the pursuit of his illicit traffic, is sometimes urged by desperation to commit.

Well; but once more to return to my chief history: I was now in Mr. Marsden's chamber; and, as the curtains were drawn on the side nearest to the door, I did not see him till I reached the foot of the bed, and then there was nothing visible but the upper part of his face; even his mouth was concealed by the clothes: his nose was pinched, as if by the hand of death; and, if he had been still, he might well have been supposed to be a corpse. But there was something at work within him, which would not let him rest for a single moment. He turned his face from side to side rapidly, and his eyes betokened enquiry and alarm. They were not fixed upon *me*, but they seemed to expect some terrific beings to advance upon him from the right, and so they were directed to that quarter; then again on the sudden they were wheeled to the left, as if the dreadful attack were to begin from that side; and this restless alternation, without any truce, continued during the whole time of my stay, and even whilst he spoke to me.

I stopped for an instant to gaze upon this unusual and piteous sight; and ah! I thought to myself, here is a man who has no friend on earth to alleviate his sorrows by a tender sympathy, and no hope beyond in Heaven. He has a wife and a daughter; but they do not come near him to assuage his troubles; they flee aloof from his countenance, or it is he himself who banishes them voluntarily, and then distracts himself with his own solitude, and the bitterness of his own reflections. But

I was now close to him on the other side, and I said in a gentle tone, "I am truly sorry, Sir, to see you in so deplorable a condition." "Why, to be sure," he answered immediately and sternly, "this room is not a fine one, nor am I lying in a fine bed."

There could not have been a more inauspicious commencement of our conversation; and I was very much vexed with myself for having spoken so indiscreetly as to be capable of being thus completely misunderstood; but to remedy the fault as soon as possible, I exclaimed, "O pardon me, good Mr. Marsden, I meant nothing of that sort; how could I? there is no better chamber than this, nor bed either, in my own rectory-house. Many a king has slept in a less spacious apartment, and in a much worse bed, with perfect content. No, no; I meant something very different; I meant this grievous disease, which seems to have brought you almost to death's door, and this uneasiness of mind which makes you so restless."

I was unfortunate again; for he was manifestly enraged at my discovery and mention of his restlessness, and he replied at once with acrimony, "You know nothing about my mind, whether it is uneasy, or not. What business have you here, to make observations upon *me*? Who sent for you? I am sure I didn't,—what are you come for?" Thus he poured his questions upon me, and I answered mildly; "I came with the intention of doing you any service that might be in my power. If your disorder was such as to require any sort of wine which I might happen to have in my cellar, and which you could not otherwise procure without much trouble

and expense, I came to offer it to you ; and if you wished your mind to be strengthened by prayer and the sacrament, to bear the worst that may happen, here I am to help you, and *that* is my proper duty. I was in hopes that you would have seen me gladly ; and therefore I did not wait till you sent for me : the very first moment I was informed that your sickness was dangerous, I hastened, of my own accord, to visit you. I would not have one soul lost, if I could help it, either by my own negligence, or by the negligence of its owner. Besides, Mr. Marsden, there seems to have been a little unkindness towards me of late on your part. Formerly we used to shew some mark of acquaintance as we passed each other in the streets ; but you left off touching your hat to me, and I was therefore afraid lest you might have taken some offence at me. If I was in the wrong, I come now to ask your forgiveness ; if you have formed an unjust opinion of *me*, I am ready to forgive *you*. At such an awful time as this, every quarrel should be made up ; the mind should be set quite at ease with respect to all worldly affairs ; and every moment should be devoted to thinking of God, and of your Saviour, and of the world to come, which will have no end."

Here I stopped ; and I was too well aware that I had made no impression upon the sick man. He muttered twice or thrice during my little speech, petulantly and peevishly, " I suppose I *must* hear you ; they tell me that I *must*, whether I will or no ; they pretend that you have a right to plague us, when we might die quietly without you." When I was silent, he cried out immediately in a louder tone ; " Now you have said your say, now you may go ; I

want none of your help for body or soul." For a moment I was too much shocked to speak when I heard this; at length I replied in sorrow, "I am grieved to the heart that you should talk and think in this manner,—it will make no difference to *me* what becomes of your soul hereafter; I expect, I wish to get nothing from you; the concern is all your own; and a mighty concern it is,—I tremble when I do but glance at it. But you yourself appear not to be sensible of your own terrible danger; that you are standing upon a fearful precipice; and that a few days, or perhaps hours, may plunge you down into an eternity of woe. O think, whilst God spares you time to think, think what it is to die, and *he* your enemy!"

Still I made no impression upon him; he set his face as the flint-stone, and his heart was impenetrable like the granite-rock. "None of your preaching," he cried; "away with it! I want none of it. Leave me to myself. You would be kind to me, you say; begone then! *That* is the only kindness for which I will thank you. Go to those who will listen; I will not; my mind is made up." "Made up to do what?" I demanded eagerly. "To die in your sins? without repentance; without prayer; without a tear; without asking for pardon; without calling upon your Saviour to intercede for your soul; without beseeching the Holy Spirit to purify and sanctify it, before it quits your body to appear before its Judge? Is it this to which your mind is made up? Then it is made up to dwell with everlasting burnings; in lakes of fire and brimstone which will never be quenched; with gnawing worms, with stinging scorpions, with furious devils, exulting in the torments

which they will inflict upon you. If you love such a prospect, then you may die in this manner; but if such a prospect startle you, (and he can have nothing human about him who is not startled at it; why, it startles even the devils themselves,) then turn to God with weeping and praying, and he will yet hear you; and the blessed Jesus, your only Redeemer, your powerful advocate, will present your prayers and your tears before God's throne, and make them effectual to your salvation, by the great undeniable plea of his own blood. Do this, and you shall in no wise be cast out; your sins, though red like scarlet, shall be made white as wool, or they shall be blotted away from his remembrance for ever."

To this point my nerves held me up, and I spoke with all the vehemence suitable to the tremendous import of what I uttered; but the last sentence, embracing the consolatory and glad tidings of grace and peace, I pronounced in a softened tone, and it opened all the sources of tender feeling; and when I had finished it, I burst into tears. But neither tears nor entreaties, nor denunciations of eternal wrath, nor offers of everlasting mercy, could touch this seared and hardened conscience. "Have done with your wining and your jibber-jabber," he exclaimed sneeringly; "I hate all your trumpery; it is trumpery indeed." My whole frame shivered with horror; I fell involuntarily on my knees; I clasped my hands; I lifted them up with a gesture of supplication towards the throne of the most High: I began to pray: "O forgive him this impiety; O deliver him, good Lord, from all blindness and hardness of heart: from all contempt of thy word and commandments."

So far I had advanced, scarcely knowing what I did ; now I was come to myself, and preparing to continue my prayer with deliberation, but with equal urgency and fervour ; when the sick man, whose hands had been under the bed-clothes before, suddenly snatched them out, and stopped his ears with them, and exclaimed, with a jeer, " Now pray on, as you like ; I shall hear no more of your speechifying ; I am safe from any further trouble, except the sight of you."

I rose from my knees in utter despair, and paced up and down with a hurried step by the bedside, totally at a loss what measures to pursue, but decidedly resolved not to go. At length having become quite calm in my own mind by these few minutes of reflection, and observing that he had withdrawn his hands from his ears to their former position within the bed-clothes, I resumed, in this manner. " You wish me gone, Mr. Marsden, and certainly, if I consulted my own ease, or was desirous of escaping from a painful situation, I should go. If I stay, therefore, you may be quite sure, that I stay only for your sake, and to do you a service which is valuable and momentous beyond anything that can be named or imagined ; for the worth of the soul is above all price ; and if I go from you, *your* soul, humanly speaking, is lost for ever ; if I stay, there is a chance of saving it, because there is a chance of your hearing me, and doing what I advise. Why should we not talk matters over in a quiet, friendly way ? Do you tell *me* your sentiments, and I will tell *you* mine, and then we will compare them coolly and amicably together, and see which are the most reasonable and the most safe. What objection can you have to this fair



proposal of mine ? To die, being so great a change, if it were for nothing else, deserves to be well considered beforehand."

"And what signifies all your consideration ?" said the sick man, interrupting me, for I had no intention of stopping here ; "no consideration can prevent Death from coming ; come he *will*, once, do what you can ; and he will come only once ; so let him come ; and let us have no idle and cowardly puling and canting about it." "Yes," I rejoined, "it is very true ; it is appointed unto men once to die ; but after this the judgment. There is the great point, Mr. Marsden ; *that* is the serious question for consideration ; what the judgment may be, and what the consequences of it." "Well," he said, interrupting me again, "if there is to be a judgment, I am no murderer ; look at these hands," at the same time he put them out and held them up, "look, there is no blood upon them." "No," I replied ; "you are not a murderer in that sense, Mr. Marsden ; but there are other senses in which a man may be a murderer, and liable to all the punishments due to a murderer, unless he appease God by repentance, and engage Jesus Christ on his behalf, by believing and trusting in him." He stared in astonishment at this, but he said nothing ; so I went on : "Yes, Sir ; and in one very plain sense, I fear, you are yourself a murderer, and if you had gone out of the world thus unprepared, the great Judge would have told you so, to your infinite surprise and horror, when you stood trembling before him. 'You have murdered *yourself*,' he would, perhaps, have thundered in your ears ; 'you have murdered yourself, and the just lot of the murderer shall be yours.' What would you have answered to this

charge? or, what *will* you answer to it, if you are determined to brave the peril? It would be well for you (I say this as your only true friend on earth) to be prepared with an answer, which might satisfy a Judge, who can never err or be deceived."

It was my wish to draw Mr. Marsden, if possible, into controversy, and to proceed according to my usual method, by question and answer, that I might make him condemn himself out of his own mouth; a circumstance which, however angry it might cause the disputant to be at first, was generally productive, in the end, of favourable consequences. For a long time, no chance presented itself of my being able to accomplish this wish; but now, since the resumption of our conversation, from a state the most hopeless imaginable, as it seemed to me, we were got suddenly and unaccountably into a sort of discussion, which might lead to something advantageous to the main object.

"A murderer!" he replied, still in apparent astonishment, "a murderer of myself, too? A suicide, forsooth? Ridiculous! Not that I think it a crime, or that I have not a right to quit life when I am tired of it; which both I and every man naturally has. But how do you make it out? When you have done this, *then* I shall know what answer to give to this Judge, whom you conjure up to frighten me." "Why, Sir, you have killed yourself by inches," I said; "the whole street knows this, and the whole street says it. You have not blown out your own brains with a pistol, or cut your own throat with a razor, which are, undoubtedly, more horrible modes of destroying a man's self; but you have chosen a mode equally sure, though more lingering; a mode, in one view of it, less excusable than those others.

A sudden uncontrollable gust of passion, or a piteous derangement of intellect, might urge a man headlong to terminate his existence by one single desperate act; but you have proceeded with your eyes open, slowly, coolly, deliberately, and sensible of your own gradual decay, till at last the hot spirit, consuming all within you, has burnt up every part on which breath and life depend. You are like a candle burnt out; or you now only glimmer in the socket, and death is at hand, to put his last extinguisher upon you. Is not this to be a suicide? The charge of the Judge, therefore, will be right; and now consider what is to be your answer. Will you deny the fact?—You cannot. Will you plead the innocence of murdering yourself in this manner? Will you plead your right to do it? The innocence of perpetual drunkenness? The right of a man to make himself a beast? Your tongue would refuse to utter such a defence; your own conscience would be revolted at it; you would be speechless; you would be self-condemned, before the judge himself condemned you by his terrible sentence of eternal punishment. Be advised, therefore, and listen to *me*. God has sent me to you, in the exercise of his providence, to warn you, to instruct you, and I hope to save you. If you resist *me*, whilst I am thus employed, you resist *him*."

During the whole of this he betrayed signs of great uneasiness, but he did not endeavour to interrupt me as he had done before. When I stopped, however, he seized eagerly upon the last sentence, and neglecting all the rest, he exclaimed, "Who are *you*, that I should not resist you if I choose to do it? You have nothing to do with *me*; I acknow-

ledge no power of yours over my conscience ; I am not within your jurisdiction ; I was never at your church in my life." "Alas ! no," I said, mournfully ; "if you had been at my church but once or twice, you could never have been in this condition. You might, indeed, have drunk yourself to death nevertheless ; but you would have adored the doings of the Almighty even in thus afflicting you ; you would have cast a humble look towards the Cross of Christ ; you would have thought of *him* who died upon it for you ; and you would have implored mercy in his name. This is what I would persuade you to do now."

"But I do not wish to be persuaded, I tell you," was his reply. "Will you cram your nostrums down my throat whether I will or no ?" "Mr. Marsden," I said, "you are acting in a way that will be dishonourable to your memory. The very scum and refuse of mankind, even they who atone for their crimes on the gallows, in general, lament those crimes which brought them to that untimely and ignominious end ; and they are willing enough to put up a prayer to their God and Saviour, for mercy and forgiveness in their terrible extremity. This excites compassion in the breasts of the spectators, and a veil is thrown over their faults. But when the contrary happens, as it does once, perhaps, in an age ; when the profligate, audacious sinner finishes his desperate career with braving the next world as he has braved this, he is abhorred by all men ; a stigma rests upon his name as long as his name is remembered ; and his poor family and relations hide their faces with shame and trouble. Is this an example which you are studying how to imitate ? Is this the fame which you

court above all things else? Is this the memorial of yourself that you would leave with your wife and daughter? A memorial which must harrow up their bosoms with indescribable pain and anguish, if they have but the least affection for you as a husband and a father. There is nobody, indeed, that has the stamp of a man upon him, but must be shocked, when he hears that his own nature has sunk so low."

As far as I could judge, he was more touched with this than with anything else which I had said hitherto. He who seemed to care for nothing, however appalling it might be to human nature, seemed at the same time to wish that his name and character might not be blackened after he was gone. Still his reply was, although in a somewhat moderated tone, that numbers of people were of the same way of thinking with himself, only that they wanted courage to maintain their principles unshaken to the last. "But mine," he said, "will stand the test; I shall stick to them throughout; and I shall be admired too by many a one, depend upon *that*. The parsons, without doubt, and all the superstitious followers of parsons, will abuse my firmness and resolution in refusing to be priest-ridden. As to my wife, she will never trouble herself about my memory; my daughter, perhaps"—Here his voice faltered a little, and for a moment I hoped that I had found a tender chord which might be struck to his profit; but he soon proceeded with his usual tone, "It does not matter; she is a disobedient hussey now, and I shall not study her humours. And, after all, what will it signify to *me* myself, which is the chief concern, what people say or think about me when I am out of the way, and shall neither hear nor know any thing of it?"

“That is true,” I said; “when you are dead, people’s opinions and speeches about you will be of no real consequence to you; no, not even if you knew them, or heard them; that is, they will have no power to alter your lot, which will be fixed for ever at the moment of your departure, and will be infinitely happy, or infinitely miserable, according to the manner in which you depart. If you depart in such a manner as that your lot *must be* to be infinitely and eternally miserable, nothing said or thought about you by those that remain here will be capable of adding one single drop to your cup of misery; it will be already brimful, full to running over. If you go up to everlasting joys and pleasures, which are promised even to sinners,—but only to the humble, the contrite, the penitent sinners, for whom their blessed Redeemer will intercede,—nothing which takes place in this world below will lessen or effect in any degree your unspeakable enjoyments in the world above. Yet it is a praiseworthy and a natural desire, (and it is seen universally in all persons of ingenuous and honourable minds,) to leave a good name behind them; and if it did not disturb their happiness afterwards, I am sure it would embitter their last moments, if they thought that they should leave behind them a name coupled with horror; a name, which nobody could pronounce without abomination; a name, at which even their dearest friends would shudder, and which must degrade them in the eyes of their neighbours and their own. As for yourself, there is your poor daughter below stairs, whom you call disobedient; of whom rather you might be proud, if I may judge by her appearance, her manners, her conversation, but more than all, by the affection and anxiety which

she feels for her father. You call her disobedient, but I saw her weeping for you; you sent her to school to be brought up like a Christian, and now she acts as such. She knows the terrors of an Almighty God, provoked to anger; therefore she weeps and trembles for you, lest you should doom yourself to such intolerable woe. She knows also that the mercies of the Gospel are still within your reach; and therefore also she weeps and trembles for you, lest you should fail to stretch out your hands and pray for them; without which they cannot be had. She is waiting now in anxious expectation, and perhaps upon her knees, the result of what I may say to you. She would be here at your bedside, upon her knees, if you would let her, to join with *me* in entreating you to have pity upon your own soul. But you scare her away from your sight; and so you will die, it seems, without the sweet peace of God, without the fond endearments of your child."

I was overcome, and paused. The lips of the sick man had been quivering for a moment or two, and I began to flatter myself that he was shaken; but it was only a little light breaking forth between two dark clouds, which close together again, and in an instant it is gone, and the same cheerless gloom remains. However, he was so far affected as not to be able to speak; but he motioned to me with one of his hands to go; and, as I did not stir, he repeated the movement with more and more vehemence; so at length I said, "Well then, Sir, I will now leave you by yourself, to reflect carefully in your own mind upon all the important subjects which I have brought to your notice, and I will call again another time; but before I go, I will kneel down, and pray with

you." "No, no, no, no, no," he cried out as loud as he could with a sort of convulsive and half-choked voice, "no prayers; I will have no prayers; you shall not pray for me." "You pray then for yourself, I hope, silently in your own breast," I said earnestly, "when nobody is with you, and when your pain reminds you that your time may soon come?" "I am under no obligation that I know of," he answered sternaly, "to tell you, or anybody else, whether I pray or not." "If you pray," I said, "that is all which is of any real importance; our knowing it is comparatively of little consequence; yet it would be a great satisfaction to us, to me as your minister, and still more to your afflicted family, to know that you did, because we should then have hopes of your salvation. Prayer, if it be sincere and from the heart, will bring down every blessing upon your head. But he, who lives without prayer, lives without a God; lives like one of the brute beasts; but he has not like *them* an excuse for doing so; for he has reason and revelation, which they have not, to teach him the knowledge of a God, and in what way alone that God may be approached; namely, by prayer."

This did not seem to move the sick man at all; but he cried out incessantly, "Will you ever have done? Will you not leave me in peace and quiet? I *must* be left to myself; I insist upon it, that you go immediately. You will not gain your ends, if you stay till the last gasp." "Well," I said, being both fatigued and in despair, "I will go this instant; and may God bless your own thoughts to yourself more than he has blessed my poor endeavours for you! If your soul be saved from utter destruction, my end is



gained, Mr. Marsden ; I have no other end to gain ; *that* would be the richest of all rewards, except indeed if it might please God to save my own soul. Ah ! Mr. Marsden, may it please him of his infinite mercy to save us both !”

With these supplications upon my tongue, I turned away slowly and reluctantly from the sick-bed, yet convinced that nothing useful could now be done, at least by *me* ; and I was disposed to accuse myself of a want of judgment in the adoption and pursuit of an improper method. Certainly I had been eminently unsuccessful ; and the want of success always creates a suspicion of the want of ability to choose or to execute the most probable means. But it will be the duty of those, for whom these dialogues are principally written, to learn something from my failures, as they may do from my successes. Both, I hope, will be instructive.

But, whatever my own doubts might have been as to the wisdom of the course which I had taken, Mrs. Marsden had none. I found her, as I suspected I should, on the stairs. When I came in sight of her, she held up her hands in token of her astonishment at the vulgar rudeness and the irrational obstinacy of her husband ; and she wore the appearance of more grief than I had thought her capable of feeling. But, I believe, what seemed to have been useless to *him* was very useful to *her*, both in opening her understanding and affecting her heart. I shut the door of the wretched chamber after me, and immediately she began : “ Oh, Sir, what infinite pains you have bestowed upon him ! There is not a stone which you have left unturned. Half as much as you have said should have been enough to have melted a rock.

But he was always of late harder than any rock. God have mercy upon him ! I see no further help ; he will perish in his sins."

This was spoken as we entered the parlour. The daughter heard it ; and, as it conveyed to her at once the whole sad intelligence, she began to wring her hands, and to weep aloud ; which increased also the sorrow of her mother. " It is very natural," I said, " that you should grieve in this manner ; but you may do perhaps something better. Go up, young woman, to your unhappy father. He has, I think, a little yearning of paternal affection towards you. Never mind your tears, (she was about to wipe her eyes,) let him see them. If he could but shed one tear himself, it might be worth a world to him. Offer him every little service in your power to soothe his irritable temper. Try if kindness will not subdue him to grief. You leave him too much alone, and he becomes by mere desertion and solitude, agonised with pain too ; wild and almost ferocious, like a savage."

Upon this she hastened up stairs without answering me. Being thus left alone with the mother, as I wished, I enquired more particularly about her husband's practices and principles, interweaving what I could conveniently for the conviction and instruction of herself. " This poor man told me," I said, " that he had never once been in my church ; had he any public exercise of religion at all ? Did he ever go to any Methodist Chapel, or any thing of that sort ?" " Never," she answered, " I am very sure, for the last fifteen years, which is the time that we have been living here. We were married, and this our daughter and the rest of our children were born in another parish." " And you," I said, " yourself, I fear, have

fallen into the same practice?" "Too much so, Sir," she answered; "I see it now." "Yes," I said, "you would not like, I presume, to finish your life, as it seems too probable, that he will do, poor man?"

"No, indeed," she exclaimed earnestly; "God forbid!" "But you were in the high-road to it," I said, "if God had not awakened you by this dreadful spectacle. Did your husband forbid your coming to church? I have never seen you there." "I have no doubt he would, Sir," she answered, "if I had attempted it, as he has lately forbidden his daughter." "God knows," I said, "how that might have been. Lately perhaps he would have forbidden you; but he did not come all at once, I suppose, to this profane, irreligious state. And if so, Mrs. Marsden, it is not improbable, that, if you yourself had formerly been anxious about public worship, he would have followed your inclination, and would never have come to this state at all."

She was conscience-struck with this observation; and, after a short pause, she began to beg earnestly of me, that upon the first vacancy in the church, I would secure some sittings for her. "It shall be done, certainly," I said; "your daughter wishes to return to the habit of going to church, as when she was at school; and it will be, I have little doubt, a wonderful benefit to yourself, after seeing so strikingly and tremendously the bad fruits of abstaining from all public worship. But this was not the only evil. Your poor husband neither read himself, at least of late, nor suffered your daughter to read the holy Bible. How long has he been living in this ungodly neglect of the precious word of life, the Divine Scriptures?" "For the very same time at least," she answered. "He had a

Bible, when we first came here, but as it was never used by him as it should have been, nor taken any care of whatever, at last it fell to pieces; and, I fear, Sir, he cut it up for waste paper in the shop." "That was a sad token," I said, "of an increasing depravity of mind, Mrs. Marsden; but you, no doubt, have taken the proper care of yours?" At first she was silent when I put this question to her, and cast her eyes upon the ground; which was a sufficient answer for me. At length, however, having bethought herself, she said, that when she had an opportunity she used her daughter's. "Then you have none of your own?" I enquired. "No, Sir, I have not," she replied, "just at present. I had *his* whilst it lasted, and now I have hers." "And do you read it often?" I enquired again. Once more she would rather have been silent, but she summoned up her courage, and answered, "I will tell you the truth, Sir; I never attempted to read it when he was present, and I was afraid he might come in and catch me reading it, if I took it up when he was away."

"Alas! alas!" I said sorrowfully; "I see too plainly how this matter is. You have both of you contributed in different ways and degrees to the ruin of each other, so far as concerns the neglect of God's Church and word; but he, poor man, has added another crime to these two, which has finished the work of ruin, and completely brutalized him. You, Mrs. Marsden, have been saved from this crime by your sex; you could not practise it at all events, as he practised it; you could not, being a woman, sit in the public houses, amidst the filthy singing, and the blasphemous swearing, and the bloody fighting, and all the other detestable beastliness, which prevail there;

your womanhood, at all events, has preserved you from this, and from all the corruption and depravity which must needs follow it. But I should hope for something better ; namely, that your sense of the hideous degradation and ugliness of intoxication, especially in a woman, without taking into the account what is to be the lot of drunkards hereafter, had been a sufficient safeguard to you, so as to preserve you from the least tendency to this vice and from all self-reproach with respect to any encouragement which you might have given to your husband to pursue it, as he did, until it has destroyed his body and his soul too, so far as we can judge. This is a matter for private self-examination. God knows the truth itself ; and whatever harm you have done in this way, it will be laid to your charge, whether you were aware of it at the time, or not, unless you disburden your conscience of it by confession and repentance."

During the latter part of this speech Mrs. Marsden trembled exceedingly, and shewed evident signs that she was not guiltless ; so being satisfied with having stirred her feelings, and troubled her repose thus far, I added, " It is not my wish to press too hard upon you under your present distress ; but the harder you press upon yourself, when you investigate your own actions, the better it will be for you. With respect to your poor husband, you perceive what has been the progress of his calamities. He neglected God, and then God gave him up to drunkenness and to a reprobate mind. What other sins he may have been guilty of, if of any more, I cannot tell, but *you* probably know, and whether you have contributed to them by your example, or by your concurrence, or by your connivance. I suggest all these things to

you, that at least you may try to work out your own salvation ; but you see now, more than you did before perhaps, that you are under a deep obligation to try to work out *his* too by every method in your power."

Mrs. Marsden's tears were now flowing profusely, and she was only able to say, that she would gladly do whatever I might point out to her as most proper, or most likely to be useful ; so I enquired, if the sick man had any friend, or relation, whom it might be advisable to send to, and invite to come to him. " Yes, Sir," she answered ; " he has a brother, an only brother, at no great distance ; but there is an old quarrel between them, which has kept them asunder for many years."—" O send for him," I cried out eagerly ; " send for him immediately ; the quarrel is an additional and stronger reason for doing it ; and who knows, whether the being reconciled to his brother may not cause him to wish to be reconciled to his God ? How soon may his brother be here ?" " If I send this evening," she replied, " he may be here to-morrow morning."—" Send, then, by all means," I said, " this very evening ; nay, this very hour. This circumstance holds out the best hope of any measure which comes into my mind. He may be softened by the interchange of forgiveness with a brother, to a degree of which we have now no idea. What sort of a person is this brother ?"—" Oh !" she answered, " he is a very *pious* man indeed !" I feared that she used the epithet, *pious*, in a sectarian sense ; so, to ascertain this point, I asked her, whether she knew to what church or chapel he was in the habit of going for public worship.—" Oh ! yes, Sir," she replied ; " I

know very well ; it is called the Ebenezer."—" Ah !" I said ; " he is not a churchman, then, and there is no knowing what his religious principles may be ; but this does not alter the fitness of my advice to fetch him without delay. A reconciliation should be brought about, if possible, between the two brothers ; that will be so far good, and it may lead to something still better."

I was now about to go, but recollecting that I had seen nothing by the bed-side proper for the sick man in his present wretched state, I mentioned it to Mrs. Marsden, and offered her various things which I thought might be comfortable to him, and at the same time soothing to his stomach. " Ah, Sir," she said, " he will take nothing but spirits ; he has lost all relish for anything else ; he is always crying out for spirits, and if we refuse them, we dare not go near him."—" Well," I said, " I will send you some Tonic-wine, such as we use in the Sacrament ; it will act as a cordial to him, and be nourishing, without being destructive. Tell him it comes from me, but do not mention a word about the Sacrament." She thanked me heartily, and I was considering whether there was anything more that I could do under the present circumstances ; and indeed two or three things besides came into my head ; but I heard a noise in the shop, which led me to suppose that there was an accumulation of customers, and nobody to serve them ; Mrs. Marsden herself being engaged with me, and the daughter being upstairs with her father ; so I hurried away without further conversation.

§ 2.—*The Same.*

ABOUT the middle of the following day I went again to Mr. Marsden's house ; and, as soon as the shop was cleared of customers, Mrs. Marsden came to me in the parlour, where she had desired me, as before, to be so good as to wait for her. Upon entering, before I could ask any question, she cried out, " All is well, Sir ; his brother has been here early in the morning, and they have made up their differences."—" Can you tell me the particulars ?" I enquired. " No, Sir, I cannot," she answered ; " I was not by, nor my daughter ; but his brother brought a minister with him ; the minister, I believe, of Ebenezer Chapel ; and they stayed a long time, Sir, and at last they prayed together ; so, as I told you at the first, Sir, all is now well."—" What, you suppose then now, do you," I said, " that your poor husband will be saved, and go to heaven ?"—" Yes, Sir," she replied ; " now that he has prayed with the minister."—" To pray to God," I said, " whether with or without the minister, if it be done in sincerity, is a very good step ; but it is only one step, and many more must be taken, before such a thing as heaven can be obtained. Do you know whether he prayed with sincerity, or only with his lips ?"—" No, indeed," she answered ; " since you ask me so particularly, I cannot say that I do."—" Do you know," I asked, " what the prayer was about ?"—" I am quite ignorant of it," she replied ; " only they told me, when they came down stairs, that I might make myself quite easy ; for that all was right."—" Well," I said, " that was a very strong assurance certainly ; but I



should hardly venture to bid you depend upon it, unless I knew precisely the characters and qualifications of these two persons, and found them to be good and sufficient in every way."—"Oh! Sir," she exclaimed, "my brother-in-law preaches sometimes himself." "That may be," I said; "but I fear we cannot reckon upon it safely. Do you not remember, two or three years ago, a man preaching several times almost opposite to your own door?" She assented. "And did any follow him," I enquired again, "but the very lowest of the rabble?"—"None others," she answered. "And what did all persons of plain common sense say of him?" I asked. "Why, Sir," she replied, "they said that he was very ignorant, and that it was shameful for him to go about in that manner, deceiving the poor people, and perhaps to their ruin."—"Yes, indeed," I said, "so it is; but did you know who he was?"—"Oh! yes, Sir," she answered; "he was very well known; he was a journeyman carpenter, and he had never had any education at all; and so it was no wonder that he talked so much nonsense."—"You heard him, did you not, from your own door?" I enquired. "Yes, Sir, every word," she replied. "And did he not tell you all," I enquired again, "that he wanted no education; for that God had called him to preach, and always put into his head what he was to say; which is what is meant by being inspired?"—"Yes, *that* he did," she answered with quickness; "but if that had been the case, I should have thought he would have spoken very differently."—"You see then, my good Mrs. Marsden," I said, "by these questions which I have asked you, and by your own answers, that no dependence can be placed upon anybody, who minis-

ters in religious matters, unless he has been properly educated for the purpose ; and that it is sometimes a false pretence, and always a great presumption, in uneducated men to say, that God inspires them, and makes education useless. You must excuse me, therefore, if I cannot altogether trust your brother-in-law upon such an awful subject, unless you can assure me that he has been educated as clergymen of the Church usually are.”—“No, Sir, *that* he has not, to be sure,” she replied ; “but I suppose the minister of Ebenezer Chapel has.”—“Very likely not,” I said ; “and it is a serious and a painful thing to reflect upon, that so many men should start up nowadays, and pretend that God has called them, and should write their names, the Reverend Mr. such or such a one, without any examination into their fitness for the office, and without any appointment from the Bishops of the Church ; and next, that so many people should pin their faith upon the sleeves of such self-appointed ministers. If the blind lead the blind, Mrs. Marsden, it is too probable that they will both of them fall into the ditch. But if they saw ever so well, and understood the business of a minister perfectly, yet it is not certain that God will bless their ministrations ; because he promises to bless those only who do things lawfully ; which these men do not, having never been prepared and ordained as Jesus Christ and his Apostles, and they who came after them, appointed in the first ages of the Gospel. Do you understand this matter now, Mrs. Marsden ? If you do, you will see clearly, that you can only depend rationally upon the Church Ministers.”

“I never knew a single word of all this before,” said Mrs. Marsden ; “but I am sure that what you

say seems very true and reasonable ; and what to think now about my poor husband I cannot tell." "Do you perceive any change in him for the better?" I enquired. "If you do, *that* would be the surest ground of reliance. Have you heard him say, that he was sorry for his sins ; either before or since these gentlemen left him?" She confessed that she had not. "Have you heard him," I enquired again, "expressing any faith in Christ Jesus?" Her answer was the same. "I am sorry for it," I said ; "but perhaps he does so in his heart, although you have not heard him do it with his lips. Have you any reason to think this?" "None whatever," she replied ; "I know nothing about it." "Then we know nothing about his salvation yet," I said. "Of this we are quite sure, that no man can be saved without repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. These are the terms of the Gospel, and they are unalterable ; so that if your husband has not these qualities, he is (*I tremble to think it*) not in a state of salvation, whatever assurances your brother-in-law and the minister of Ebenezer Chapel may have incautiously given you. But I will tell you for your comfort, that, whenever these qualities are obtained, be it ever so late, we have reason to believe that God will graciously accept them, and forgive all the past, and receive the sinner into mercy. But then the repentance must be real, and deep, and in the very heart ; and the faith must be equally so. It will not be enough for a man to say that he repents and believes ; by saying so he may deceive his friends and himself too ; but God cannot be deceived, and therefore nothing will do with God, except such a repentance and faith as I have described ; and in

general they never exist without showing very strong symptoms indeed, but more especially if they only begin on the bed of death. Have you remarked in your husband any change, of any sort or kind whatever, since I was with him yesterday? I should like to know this accurately before I go up to him; if indeed he will see me."

Mrs. Marsden was ready to answer me, but, observing her shop full she rang a bell, and said, "My daughter will come to you, Sir, immediately; and she can tell you what you wish to know better than I can, because she has been most with him. You will excuse me, Sir; for, I see, I am sadly wanted." "By all means," I replied; and so she hastened to her business, and in less than a minute afterwards her daughter entered the room, and we both sat down and began to converse. "Have you this instant left your poor father?" I said. "Yes, Sir," she answered. "And how is he?" "Worse, I fear, Sir."—"In mind?" I enquired. "No, not in mind," she replied; "he is better in mind."—"In what respects?"—"He is not so rough and unkind as he was; he seems glad to have me with him; he desired that I would thank *you*, Sir, for sending him the wine; he shook hands with my uncle, whom he used to speak ill of before; and he permitted the gentleman who came with my uncle to pray with him." "Very well," I said; "these are certainly the marks of an amendment in his mind; that is, the harshness of his temper, and the hardness of his heart seem to be softened a little; and if we had abundance of time before us, we might proceed step by step to what we wish. As you are a young wo-

man, it will be worth while for you to note this; how slow and small the progress is which a sinner makes towards righteousness even in the long space of twenty hours. Many persons foolishly suppose that they may repent and be righteous in a moment and when they will; but it is more likely that such persons will never repent at all. This is for your own instruction. When I saw your poor father yesterday, he was as remote from repentance as can possibly be imagined. Twenty hours have passed since. Have you heard him say anything which implies that he repents?" "I cannot say that I have," she answered. "Do you know," I enquired, "why your uncle and the minister of Ebenezer Chapel gave so favourable an account of him to your mother?"—"I know of no other reason," she replied, "but because of their praying together."—"Will your father, do you think," I said, "permit *me* to see him again, and also to pray with him, or rather perhaps for him, as they did?"—"I am almost sure that he will," she answered; "for besides what I have to tell you, Sir, about the wine, he said it was a very kind act of you to advise us to send for my uncle; which my mother mentioned to him yesterday, lest he might suppose that she had dared to do it of her own head; and our behaving differently to him from what we did before, and which seems to make him more comfortable than he was, he considers as coming from *you*, Sir. For when he saw how very attentive I was to him, he asked me, if Dr. Warton had desired me to do what I did, and I said, Yes, dear father; but I would have done all this, and much more of my own accord, if I had not feared that it would displease you. And I

will tell you another thing, Sir, if I do not tire you."—"Oh! no," I said; "this is just what I wish to hear, and what it is necessary for me to know."

"Well then, Sir," she began; "when I went up to him yesterday at your command, I said to him immediately, Can I do anything for you to ease your pains, or to make you more comfortable, dear father? Upon which he looked sternly at me at first, but seeing, I suppose, that my face was wet with tears, he asked me more mildly than I expected, what I had been crying for. It is all on your account, dear father, I said. You would not let the minister pray for you, and how then will your poor soul be saved? And what a life shall I lead for the rest of my days, when you are gone, dear father, and I know not whither, but shall tremble to think?"

"Indeed," I said, interrupting her, "you spoke to him very feelingly, and very judiciously; what did he answer to this?"—"O Jane, he replied, do not trouble yourself about such matters as those. Dr. Warton is a great hypocrite, and does not believe one word of what he said to me." You will not be angry with me, Sir, I hope, for mentioning the exact words which my father used." "By no means," I answered; "and I long much to know whether you defended me from this charge, or not; and if so, how you did it." "You shall hear, Sir," she resumed. "Dr. Warton a hypocrite, dear father? I cried out. Well now, that is very strange. His eyes were very red, when he came down to us. Hadn't he been crying whilst he was up here, and talking to you? Oh! yes, he said sneeringly, the Doctor, (meaning *you*, Sir,) acted his part as well as

could be ; as well as those stage-players that we went once to see. Well but, dear father, I said, what had Dr. Warton to get by *that* ? He does not take any money for visiting the sick people, that I ever heard of. If he never visited one sick person, I suppose his tithes would be none the less for *that*. Besides, if he was not in earnest about it, he might bargain with his curate to do all this part of the minister's business. Indeed, they say that he keeps a curate chiefly for this reason, that, whilst the curate is doing other things, he himself may have the more time to visit the sick."

"Upon my word, young woman," I said, "you seem to know as much of my plans as I know of them myself ; and so you defended me in the best possible manner, by telling the truth. I should think that your father would have found some difficulty in overturning this. What did he answer?"—"He did not answer at all, Sir," she replied ; "he appeared to think very deeply about it ; and it happened that I was called down. But by the time I went up again, your wine had arrived, Sir, and he tasted it immediately, and thought it would agree with him very well, and he said, Why, Jane, this Doctor may be in earnest for what I know ; but then he is very foolish if he is.—Foolish, dear father ? I answered. Surely, if he is in the right in his opinions, he is very wise and very charitable in doing what he does ; and if he is mistaken (but I do not understand how that can be) there is no harm, but a great deal of good in our being what he desires us to be."

Here I stopped her, and commended her again, and said, "My good young woman, if you had fre-

quent opportunities of speaking to your poor father in this manner, you might do him a great service indeed, and more than I can do him by mere talking. He suspects *me*, you perceive, as if I were only acting a part; but he will not suspect *you*, being his child, and having no apparent reason for thus talking to him, except because you have a due affection for him. But now go on and tell me, whether anything more occurred which it might be useful for me to know."—"There was nothing more of consequence, Sir," she answered. "He was silent after I had said what I last mentioned, and the rest of his conversation with me was about his family affairs."—"Very well," I said, "then I will go away for the present, and return in the afternoon. Tell him, if you please, that I have been here to inquire after him; but that I would not come up now, lest I might fatigue him too much, after the company which he has already seen this morning."—"It will be better, Sir, certainly," she replied, "that you should come a little later. In the course of two or three hours I may find occasion to say something to him, which may prepare him to receive you the more willingly." "I hope it may be so," I said, "and that God may prosper the various means which we devise for his good. Without God's blessing we shall labour in vain." So I left her; and, as I passed through the shop, having told Mrs. Marsden that I was coming again, I walked hastily away to perform other parochial duties which required my attention; but Mr. Marsden was always uppermost in my thoughts, and the great question was, how to treat such an extraordinary case with skill and effect.

When I reached home, I took down Paley, to look



if there were any prayers *there*, which might suit me; for not a single particle of our own Visitation-service was at all applicable; and I doubted whether I might be able, upon the instant, to adapt any of the Psalms to my purpose. Other manuals I had tried on former occasions, and had now laid them by as useless, except, perhaps, to furnish ideas and matter. But some of the prayers collected by Paley, and one or two of his own composition, I had used lately, as I thought, with success. My present search, however, brought nothing to light, which was, strictly and throughout, what the present occasion required; so that it seemed as if the case of Mr. Marsden was single and alone. All that was most promising, and might cost me the least study to alter, and so leave my mind disengaged to seize upon circumstances which might occur, I selected, and marked with papers inserted at the bottom of the pages instead of the top; for I considered, whether rightly or wrongly I do not know, that it would be better for the sick man not to be aware what pains I had taken to enable myself to produce an impression upon him. Meanwhile, as it was by conversation that most would probably be done at first, if anything were done, I had turned the subject over and over in my thoughts, and treasured up in my memory some plausible topics to be ready for use, if circumstances should call for them.

Thus armed then, and, as I went along, invoking superior aid with many a silent prayer, I arrived at the scene of action. "He will see you, Sir," said Mrs. Marsden as I entered; "he makes no objection; and I must tell you, Sir, another thing, besides what my daughter has mentioned to you; a thing which

seemed at first to surprise him and vex him, but afterwards to please him. When I saw him soon after your visit yesterday, he asked me, bluntly and eagerly, what fee I had given you, Sir; and when I told him that you would not take anything of any sort or kind, not even a glass of wine, and also that you never *did* take anything from anybody on such occasions, he looked a little ashamed of the unworthy suspicion which had come into his mind, and after a while he said, Perhaps this parson (*that* is what he called you, Sir) may be a different man from what I supposed him to be. No doubt he supposed that all parsons were hypocrites and rogues." "Very well," I replied, "the more his opinion is changed about me, the more chance I shall have of prevailing over his apparent resolution to die impenitent and unbelieving. But now I will go up to him, if you please."—"If *you* please, Sir," she said; "you will find my daughter there."

I should have mentioned in its proper place her offer to present me with a fee for the visitation of her husband, and the explanation which I gave her upon refusing it. I gave the same explanation very often; for fees were very often proposed to me on similar occasions; and sometimes the people said, "Well, Sir, if you refuse us now, we shall know how to manage it in another way;" and so perhaps the fees appeared afterwards in the shape of an Easter-offering. My answer to the offer always was, "I take nothing when my office can only be performed at your private houses; and assure yourselves, that I shall think myself well rewarded for my trouble, if I see you hereafter diligent in the performance of your religious duties."

I was now in the sick chamber; and when I had passed the curtain, Miss Marsden rose from a chair on the further side of the bed, and advanced to meet me, and said, "Oh! it is Dr. Warton; I am glad you are come, Sir!" "Yes, indeed," I answered; "I ought perhaps to have been here long before, my good young woman; but I was afraid that your poor father, in *his* weak state, might be fatigued too much with seeing and talking to many persons in quick succession. How is he now? Can you promise me that he is any better?" "I fear I cannot, Sir," she replied; "I wish I could;" and, upon saying this, she was about to quit the room; but I stopped her, and desired her to stay with us; for I thought that, in the present stage of our proceedings, it was more likely that I should be treated with civility and attention if she were in the room, than if I were left alone with the sick man; and also I was not without hope that, in some way or other, she might add to the force of my arguments and my prayers. I led her back therefore to the same chair, on which she had been sitting before; and now came the important moment when it behoved me to open the conversation. As yet I had not had time to turn my face towards the bed; and, I own, it was not without considerable perturbation that at length I did so. Very often had I occasion to remark the justice of Horace's maxim, "*Dimidium facti, qui coepit, habet;*" but here the much more difficult question was how to begin well.

Before I spoke, I had a single glance at his countenance, and it suggested to me my first sentence. The acrimony, the fierceness, the restlessness, so strongly depicted in it yesterday, had now disap-

peared; and, in consequence, the whole expression of it was entirely changed, and made me think that he must needs be better in every respect. So I said, "Your daughter tells me, Sir, that she fears your health is not improved; but surely it is her anxiety which causes her to form this opinion; you seem to me to be quite another person. I know, however, that your disorder is a very deceitful one, and that no dependence is to be placed upon looks. You are perhaps the best judge yourself."—"Yes," he answered with propriety enough, "I am the best judge; and I am quite certain that I get weaker and weaker every day; and that I am only kept alive by the nourishing things which I take. Your Tent-wine, Sir, is of great service to me, so far as it is of service to prolong my life a few days more or less. However I am bound to thank you; you intend me well." "I do, certainly," I said; "and I shall be most happy to supply you with more of this wine; and I hope, too, that you will want it for many days; for I am almost sure that it will be of very great service indeed to you, that your life should be spared for some time longer. If God would be so gracious, there are many things, I think, that might be done for your own benefit, and for the peace and comfort of your family. But even a day rightly spent would be a mighty gain. Since yesterday no little has been done; in another day you might do twice as much. In one day you have been reconciled to a wife, a daughter, and a brother; in another you may be reconciled to your God. And let me ask you, Mr. Marsden, have you not felt some inward satisfaction and delight, in being restored to the affection of those, whom nature bound to you by the tenderest

and the strongest ties, when unhappy circumstances had rent those ties asunder? I know you have; and I promise you a far greater, yes, a greater than you can now conceive, in being restored to *his* affection, who delights to be known by his infinite mercy rather than by his infinite power; who opens wide his arms to receive and embrace the penitent sinner that wishes to return to him; who watches over him indeed with more than the tenderness of an earthly father, whilst he is yet afar off, and only the first movements of sorrow are working in his breast; who runs forth to meet him, and falls upon his neck and kisses him, when he is retracing his steps towards his heavenly home. This is the beautiful picture of God's dealings with those who grieve that they have offended so good and great a Being. O strive to realize this picture, Mr. Marsden; and then I promise you that your tears of sorrow shall soon be followed by tears of joy. God sometimes speaks in thunder, and then again for a while he hides his terrors, and calls to us all with the gentle voice of persuasion: 'I made you; I hate nothing that I have made; I afflict no man willingly; I would not the death of a sinner, but rather his repentance and life; why will ye die of your own selves? Why will ye not understand; that my patience and forbearance and long suffering should bring you all to a godly sorrow?' Who can resist such a call as this? Who will not answer to it with gratitude, with fervour, with excessive joy? Do *you* obey it Mr. Marsden, and I promise you a peace of mind, which surpasses all your present powers of understanding it; and a hope that shall not be disappointed hereafter of endless happiness in heaven. Such a peace and such a hope are heaven itself upon earth!"

Here I ceased for the present. The young woman had been for some time sobbing aloud; and, being myself tremblingly alive to the momentous situation in which I was placed, I had not spoken what is recorded above without many a pause, or without many a struggle to repress the feelings which might otherwise have utterly overwhelmed my voice. But whether the pauses and the strugglings increased or lessened the effect of what I said upon the sick man, I was entirely ignorant. From the beginning he closed his eyes; nor did he open them when I stopped, or shew any sign of an intention to answer me. So I turned to his daughter, and said, "Come, let us kneel down by the side of this sick bed, and ask God to bless what we are about, and to shew his great strength in our miserable weakness. I was comforted with hearing, that your poor father had joined with your uncle in prayer this morning, after the truly Christian act of being reconciled to him; if he will join again with *you* and *me* now, who knows how many other Christian acts may follow the lifting up of his hands and thoughts to God? This book will help me to speak, and to pray to God, aright."

Still the sick man kept his eyes shut; but we were now upon our knees, and I had opened Paley at my first mark. It was the 362d page, at the top of which stood the Collect for the 10th Sunday after Trinity; after which came a passage from the burial service beginning thus; "In the midst of life we are in death." This passage has been justly extolled by Law, in his "Serious Call," as unrivalled in awful sublimity. He who can pronounce it over the dead, without being deeply affected by it, must be made of hard materials; but I thought it very affecting, when

I pronounced it now over the living. The accumulation of God's attributes, which we have there, and the immediate repetition of the same, and the closing the whole with that other attribute of judge, which might well be uppermost in the thoughts, when the dead or the dying are before our eyes, is beyond measure striking and overpowering. After this I read the collects on the next page; and then I passed to my second mark, which was at page 413. Here begin a series of paragraphs in the form of distinct prayers, adapted to the cases of persons who have been notoriously wicked livers; and from this time most of the prayers which I used had the sick man himself for the personal object of them; but I found it necessary to make frequent alterations. The 3rd and 4th paragraphs on the 414th page required none; the two next a good deal; then came the three concluding ones, which were nearly what I wished. A long prayer for one who is hardened and impenitent followed these, and I read the whole of it with very little change. Then I passed to my third mark at page 434, and took the general prayer for preparation and readiness to die; but I was obliged to leave out some passages, and to alter others, before it suited my ideas of the present exigence.

Meanwhile the poor young woman had become quite oppressed with her grief; and she disturbed me so much, that I was perpetually forced to stop. At length, when I came to the end of the prayer just mentioned, I whispered to her, that it would be better for her to go down stairs; and I assisted her to rise, and conducted her to the door; then returning instantly, and observing that the sick man had opened his eyes, but that the sockets had not a single drop in

either of them, I said, " *You* are the most interested in what is passing, Sir, and yet you seem to be the least affected by it. As for your poor daughter, she can bear this trying scene no longer; I pity her from my heart; and I enter readily into her feelings, and esteem her highly for them. Ah! Sir, how painful it must be to you, to be separated from her, when you have but just found her value! What a comfort, what a prop and support, would she have been to your old age and grey hairs, if you had reached that period of human life, and had worn those honoured tokens of it! But alas! this once reasonable hope is now dashed to pieces on the ground; you are wasting away yourself in the prime of manhood; and you will leave *her* fatherless and unprotected. Do you not now when you look backwards and forwards regret the circumstances which have thus reversed the usual course of Providence?"

He was not unmoved, I thought, by this pathetic appeal; but he persisted in his silence, and I began to fear that he had determined to persist in it at all events whilst I staid with him; so, for the sake of trying him more pointedly, I asked him, whether he had heard and understood the whole of what I had read to him. " *I heard it all,*" he answered; and I was glad that he spoke at any rate; " *but I did not understand it all,*" he added; " *what I did understand was some of it true; and, as to the rest, I know nothing about it; it is quite out of my line.*"—" *Were you not instructed in these things in your youth, as we all generally are?*" I enquired. " *Perhaps I might have been,*" he replied. " *Then you have forgotten them since,*" I said; " *that is, the knowledge, or conviction of them, or perhaps both,*



have been rooted out of your mind by other things. Do we not retain the knowledge of what we learn in our earlier years by practice afterwards? And does not the same practice keep up the conviction too?" "I suppose so," he answered. "And what," I said, "is the kind of practice by which the knowledge and conviction of religious things is preserved? Is it not by going to church to hear about them, and by reading about them in the Bible and other sacred books, and by thinking of them in our own minds, and feeling them in our hearts? Must not *he* in time forget them, or lose the sense and conviction of them, who does nothing of this sort?" "It is likely enough," he replied. "Well," I said; "and suppose, besides this neglect, he has often been in the habit of hearing something or other against them; something to ridicule and deride them; something pretending to be argument, to overturn them; and all this too from the companions with whom he delights to live, and with whom he expects to live all his days; will they not be the sooner erased, if not from his understanding, yet at least from his heart and affections?"—"It could hardly be otherwise," he answered. "We will go one step further," I said. "Suppose besides, that he and his jovial companions should be conscious to themselves, that they live a life which is condemned by the religion which they learnt in their youth; what will the consequence be then? If they neglect it entirely themselves, and hear it constantly vilified by one another, and know that they act in opposition to its laws, they will begin to hate the very name of it, I think, and to wish that it was extirpated out of the world. But then (and let us consider the matter quietly together) is this sort of

life, spent in vice and without religion, a state of things to be desired even by themselves? Is it not attended in this world (not to mention the other) with loss of credit and respectability; with ruin of business and property; with the destruction of health and the shortening of life? Would you not reckon all these things bad, and to be avoided?"—"I suppose that they would be reckoned so by many," he replied. "Well then," I said; "I come back to my old question; do you not now yourself regret that *you* have pursued such a course? Or, would you now choose such a course, if you were beginning again?"

He hesitated, and would have returned, I dare say, if possible, to his former system of silence; but having gotten him at an advantage by the answers which he had already given, I pressed him with the particulars. "Would you wish," I asked, "to be without credit and respectability?" "I care not much," he said, "what people may say or think of me. But I should not be without friends; I should be liked by some, I have no doubt."—"By the good, or by the bad?" I inquired. "You may be pleased to call them the bad, Sir," he answered, "but they are good enough for *me*."—"Well," I said, "and what do you think of ruin of business and property? Would you choose *that*?"—"I would not choose it," he replied; "nor does it always happen to the persons whom you describe."—"Speaking," I said, "of persons in your own rank of life, Mr. Marsden; does not the quantity of their business, and the amassing of property, depend chiefly upon their diligence, and their industry, and their frugality, and virtues of that sort?" He was unwilling to assent

to this ; so I said, "Tell me candidly, whether you are not a much poorer man now than you were a few years ago ; whether you do not pay your taxes and rates with more difficulty, although they are less ; whether your wife and daughter are not more pinched at home than they used to be ; and, if this cannot be denied, as I am sure it cannot, tell me next how this has arisen ?"

He was silent, no doubt, from self-conviction, so I went on to the question about the ruin of health, and the shortening of life, and I asked him, if *that* was a desirable thing ? He shook his head, but said nothing. I pressed him again with particulars. "Are not gout and rheumatism, and generally all disorders attended with pain ?" He allowed it. "Do men desire pain for its own sake ?" He could not say that they did. "Do not those disorders also put it out of our power to pursue our usual employments, and sometimes even to help ourselves ?" He granted it. "Do they not often produce a disgusting look ; pale, or yellow, or livid ?" He could not deny it. "Do they not sometimes compel us to support our steps with a single stick, or even to walk upon two crutches ?" He granted it. "Do they not often make us loath our food and pass sleepless nights ?" — "It is true enough," he said. "Do not repeated attacks gradually undermine our strength of body, and of mind also, and in general bring men prematurely to the grave ?" — "It was so, without doubt," he answered. "But what is it," I asked, "that Nature herself seems to have intended ? Does not the perfection and happiness of a man consist in the very contrary of all these things ? Freedom from pain, vigour and activity of limb, a ruddy bloom of

countenance, good appetite, sound sleep, a clear and powerful understanding, a green old age; are not these the things which Nature intends, and wishes?"—"I suppose they are," he replied. "Would it not be a proof, then, of a strange perversion of intellect and feeling in any man who did not desire them?" It was impossible for him to deny it. "And if those contrary things, betokening the decay of health and strength, came upon him accidentally, must he not lament it as excluding him from the main functions and purposes of life?" He granted it. "And what," I said, "if they came upon him by his own fault? Must he not accuse and condemn himself for his imprudence, or whatever the occasion might be?"—"Perhaps he would," replied the sick man. "And grieve," I said, "and repent that he had not chosen a different system of life; and wish, although in vain, to have the power of choosing and beginning again?" "Some people might do so," he answered. "Yes, all," I said; "all that have a single spark within them of the true feeling of a man; all that do not basely degrade themselves below the level of their own proper nature; all these must grieve and repent; that they are no longer what men should be, but wretched, contemptible creatures, useless to their country, a disgrace to their connexions, a burden to themselves."

Here I stopped for a moment, to see if he would make any remark; he made none; so I continued in this manner. "I have not so mean an opinion of you, Mr. Marsden, as not to be quite sure, that, if you had now your free choice to begin again, you would adopt, or at least resolve to adopt a different mode of life from *that* which has destroyed in you

the intentions of Nature, and the perfections of a man ; and consequently, that you regret the past, and wish it, if possible, undone ; even upon those temporal and worldly considerations alone, which I have yet brought forward to convince you. For I cannot induce myself to think that you will now affirm that such a mode of life, followed by such fatal effects, has pleasures immediately attending upon it, to counterbalance all those effects, and to render them worth enduring for the sake of those pleasures. When it was uncertain whether such effects would follow or not, you might have embraced the pleasures, and run the risk of the consequences ; but now you have the power of comparing the two things together, the pleasures and the consequences, by your own actual experience ; and you must indeed be utterly bereft of all the understanding of a man, if you could maintain with sincerity, that the effects and consequences, although a mighty evil, are still less evil than the pleasures were good. Besides, I call them pleasures only for the sake of giving them a name ; but they are not real pleasures ; nor, be they what they may, is there any real good in them at all, or any real happiness resulting from them. Pray what do you think of *me*, Mr. Marsden ? Do you consider me a less happy man, because I never drink to intoxication ; or sit, smoking tobacco and singing lewd songs, in public houses ? On the contrary, do you not know assuredly, that such practices would be misery to me instead of happiness ?

"Yes, Sir," answered the sick man, rather to my surprise, after being silent so long ; "it might be so with *you* ; but I have seen a man of *your* cloth as deep a drinker as I have ever been ; aye, and as fond

of a smutty song too ; and I suppose he found such a life to be a pleasant one." "And were you not even yourself ashamed of him, and scandalized at him?" I asked. "Why, *that* is true enough," he confessed. "Then," I said, "you bore testimony, by that very feeling, that such pleasures ought not to have been pleasures to *him* at least. But I ask you besides, did he not come skulking into the ale-house, and go skulking out again?"—"Yes," he said, "I believe he did not wish to be seen."—"Then," I rejoined, "he also bore testimony, by his own desire of secrecy, that he was pursuing things which nothing but low passions and a depraved appetite could make him consider in the light of pleasures. In *this* case, therefore, and in *my* case, Mr. Marsden, you would see the matter clearly enough ; and you would pronounce, without hesitation, that we had mistaken the true nature of pleasure ; and, in short, that there must be something low, and perverted, and depraved about us, to lead us into such a mode of life. Now, what is there in your own case to produce so great a difference as to make you imagine, that, what is a mistaken notion of pleasure in *us*, may be a right notion of it in *you*?"

"Why, the clergy," he said immediately, "have a trade of preaching up temperance and sobriety ; and of threatening all people, who follow contrary practices, with I know not what horrible punishments ; it would be therefore both strange and disgraceful in *them*, if they were given to those practices, themselves."—"That is true, undoubtedly," I rejoined ; "but it does not alter the nature of the case to others. Why do the clergy preach, that men should be sober, and temperate in all things ; and why do

they unfold the terrors of the Lord against the gluttons, and the drunkards, and other sensualists? If they were to choose a profitable trade, as you call it, they should rather preach in favour of all indulgence, and bid men follow the bent of their own several inclinations. But they do the very reverse; because they know, that the laws of Nature and of God, who is the lord and author of Nature, require the former mode of conduct, and forbid the latter; and, whenever God and Nature forbid any thing, it is because the thing is wrong in itself, and the cause of misery to individuals, families and nations; and, consequently, any pleasurable feeling arising from indulgence in that thing, is a vicious feeling, perverted from truth and from real purity of taste and principle. This, you see, applies to all alike; and observe besides, that whenever God and Nature make laws, they will to a certainty punish the breach of them; either here or hereafter, or in both the stages of our being; in both, if the punishment inflicted here do not produce repentance and amendment. It is God's wish that they should, as you heard in those prayers which I read to you; but if those punishments in this world only harden men's hearts, and they die incorrigible and impenitent, then will God pour out upon them a ten-fold vengeance in the next world. Knowing all this, we preach as we do; and nothing can be worse for the clergy themselves than to set a bad example to others, by acting differently from what they preach; but I tremble for those, who, when they stand at the last dreadful seat of judgment, will have nothing to plead in their own excuse, but an example, which they knew to be bad and vicious. Will not God say to them, you had my holy Book to

go to, and there you might have read my will ; but you might have read it besides in the miseries which I ordained to follow your practices. You might neglect my Book, or contradict it ; but you could not neglect or contradict these miseries ; you felt them to your cost, and you saw from whence they came ; but still you did not become humble and contrite towards me ; you did not lament that you had broken my laws and offended me ; you did not ask me to forgive you in my Son's name, whom I sent to die in your stead, that I might be able to forgive you consistently with justice ; you did not resolve, if I spared your life, to live differently, under the guidance and with the help of my Holy Spirit ; what have you now therefore to say, in bar of everlasting punishment about to fall upon you ? Plead not before *me* the example of the wicked, or the customs and fashions of a corrupt world ; you knew how to do good, and you have done evil ; you sinned not in ignorance, but with your eyes open ; and you would not relent. Your sins therefore remain, and cry out against you. You died in them ; and there is no redemption left for you. Can any reasonable answer be given to this ?

At first, when I stopped, he was silent ; and I was afraid that it was his intention not to speak to this point at all ; but at length he said, " Yes, Sir ; but you talked of gnawing worms and stinging scorpions, and furious devils ; can anybody believe such things as these, except some crazy or superstitious old woman ?"—" Attend," I replied ; " when the Scriptures would excite us to endeavour to obtain the joys of the next world—as we are not capable in our present state of forming any idea about them—they



tell us, that no eye of man hath seen, or ear heard, or imagination conceived, what is prepared for the righteous. Sometimes, however, because we are so gross and carnal as to be most affected by sensible images, they represent heaven to us as a place, where we shall meet with everything considered to be great and splendid, or delightful in this world; and where nothing of a contrary nature will find admittance; where there will be abundance of crowns, and sceptres, and riches, and honours, and pleasures; but no tears, no sorrows, no hunger, no thirst, no want of any kind, no pain of any kind, and no more death. So also in the case of hell; the misery prepared there for the devil and his angels, and for all sinners, who die unrepentant and unbelieving, exceeds everything that we have seen or heard of in this world; nay, everything that any man's fancy, most creative of horrors, can possibly imagine to itself; but because the apprehension of mankind in general is dull and blunt, and requires to be sharpened by something material which they feel or know, the misery of hell is represented to them, with a merciful view, under the forms of the most terrible earthly things; the bites and stings of venomous deadly creatures, and lakes of fire and brimstone never to be quenched. But whether the rewards or the punishments will be precisely these or not, we know so far, that the rewards will produce unutterable joy, and the punishments unutterable woe; weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. God, we may be sure, who is infinite in power, will be able to reward and to punish infinitely; and I fear, therefore, if it were possible for a man to prove, that there would be no gnaw-

ing worm, no unextinguishable fire in hell, he would not on that account escape the avenging arm of the almighty, ever-living God."

I dwelt upon this with an energy of manner, and solemnity of tone, which might well have struck the sick man with awe and dismay; but I could not perceive that it affected him more than a mere idle speculation might do; and not as one of which he would ascertain the truth or the falsehood, to his infinite concern, in a few days. And, in fact, he went on to speculate. For when I had finished my last explanation, he said, with the pretended air of a man wishing for information, although there was mixed with it the evident sneer of unbelief; "And will these punishments continue for ever; do you tell us? What? punishments without end hereafter for sins so short in this world? sins, too, which have been already punished here, in the various ways that you mentioned before?"—"Yes," I answered; "so we are positively assured in the word of God, which cannot lie or deceive us; and we can know nothing about such a subject in any other way. And if eternal punishment for temporal sin were ever so unjust, it makes no difference in the event. You cannot demur to such a being as God, and say, your decree is unjust; I will raise my voice against it; I will not submit to it. Submit you must, unless you can displace him. But, without doubt, his decree is perfectly just; for not only his power, but his justice also is infinite. As to the temporal punishment, if it be such as should naturally lead the sinner to repentance, but does not, it is manifest that it aggravates the sin, and makes it worthy of a severer punishment. In fact, the sinner, who is suffering under some tem-

poral calamity, and is brought even to the brink of the grave by it, without expressing any sorrow for his sin, and the offence which he has given to God, acts in the same manner as if he defied him to do his worst. He at least, therefore, would have no right to complain, if God should do so; that is, should punish him eternally, when temporal punishment had not reclaimed him from the error of his ways. Besides, was he not directly warned, that if the temporal punishment failed, it would be succeeded by an eternal one? 'But I could not believe any such thing;' he might perhaps attempt to argue. 'Why not?' the answer would be; 'Is it not expressly so said in my Bible, and do not my preachers continually sound it in your ears?' 'Yes,' he might go on, 'but I never look into the Bible, nor listen to the preachers.' 'Then you are condemned out of your own mouth. How otherwise could you know my will, and my intended dealings with you? The truth is, you refused to be taught; you followed blindly where your bad passions led; you would not believe that sin could be so exceedingly sinful; but now you will find what it was to sin against an infinite Being, and how sinful *that* must be, which nothing could expiate but the blood of my own eternal Son. Your punishment will force this conviction upon you, and the conviction shall be a part of your punishment. Your reward should have been eternal, however short your life, if you had loved and feared me: your punishment shall be eternal, because you have hated and despised me.' What shall we reply to this, Mr. Marsden?"

"I can say nothing to it," was his answer; "I cannot comprehend such things; I cannot turn my

mind to them in this state; it is too late." "Well then," I said, "to go back to the point at which we had arrived, and from which we have been drawn aside to other things; you are sorry for the mode of life which you have pursued, and which has brought you to this extremity; and if you had to choose again, you would choose differently; is this your feeling?" "Perhaps it is," he replied, but with a seeming reluctance. "Very well," I said; "*that* is the first step; the second, and a much more important one, is, to be sorry, that by your conduct you have broken the divine laws, and offended your good and gracious Father, who is in Heaven: do you feel this sorrow?" "You must excuse me, Dr. Warton," he answered impatiently; "I am worn out by this very long conversation, and I cannot pretend to speak off hand to such difficult matters. I want my daughter's help immediately, and you would oblige me, if you would go."

It was impossible not to see that this was a mere scheme to get rid of me; but I thought it expedient to comply with his wish at once, and not to irritate him against me, lest he might determine to admit me no more. So I said, "Then I will leave you now, Sir, to God's good care; and I beseech him to enlighten your mind, and touch your heart, that you may both understand and feel the things which you have heard, and which concern your present and everlasting peace." No amen from the lips of the dying man followed this pious ejaculation of mine. Apparently nothing was yet effected towards the great object of my solicitude. He had exchanged a brutal ferocity for a cool civility, but he seemed to be as distant as ever from a state of penitence. I went away, there-

fore, dissatisfied with my prayers, with my reasonings, and with myself ; but I determined to persevere, although in utter despair.

I met Miss Marsden on the stairs, going up to her father ; and I detained her a moment to tell her the painful news, that we had arrived at no favourable conclusion. " I am grieved to wound you," I said, " but unless you know the truth, you will not be able to co-operate with me. He is sorry, I believe, for his past life ; but it is only a worldly sorrow, and not a godly sorrow ; for God is not concerned in it at all, so far as I can judge. If you remember the prayers which I put up to God for him, you may perhaps do some good by recalling them to his recollection, and making them the subject of your conversations with him. I can suggest nothing more to you, except never to cease intreating the mercy of God upon his soul." Tears filled her eyes, as I thus briefly explained the defeat of my endeavours, and the gloomy prospect before us ; she would have spoken, however, but grief choked her utterance, and so she passed on of necessity without speaking a word. Mrs. Marsden was not in the shop at the instant of my reaching it, and I was glad to be detained no longer in this wretched abode. She will know soon enough, I thought with myself, the bad results of the day, and may well spare me the pain of relating them. So I hastened homewards, ruminating upon the sad case of this obdurate sinner, and picturing him to my imagination as one of those, against whom God had sworn in his wrath, that they should never enter into his rest.

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§ 3.—*The Same.*

EARLY the next morning I had a visit from Miss Marsden. I desired that she might be brought to me in my study. She came to ask for a little more of the tent-wine; and "a little," she said, "would be quite enough." As she spoke this, she shewed marks of great distress; so I conjectured that her father was much worse. "Sit down, my good young woman," I said, reaching her a chair; "sit down, and calm yourself; and let us consider quietly in what state we are, whilst the wine is prepared for you." Upon this she sat down, and composed her agitation as well and as speedily as she could. At length I said, "It is a painful subject for you to talk about, but you must rouse up all your fortitude to bear it. If *you* yield yourself to sorrow, the last human chance of success will be thrown away. Has your poor father passed a bad night?" "Yes, Sir," she answered; "a very bad one; he was often quite delirious; and this morning the change in his countenance is mournful indeed. Death is now fast coming on, Sir, without doubt; but his understanding yet remains, and—and—and," she said with sobs, "the hardness of his heart."—"If his understanding yet remains," I rejoined, "another attempt may be made to save him—may God bless and prosper it! But if not, we shall at the least be guiltless in our own consciences of not having exerted our best powers to do it. We might wish to provide for ourselves the supreme consolation of seeing him depart in peace; but we must bow to the mysterious ways of God in his government of mankind. Tell me, however, by

what means you have ascertained that the hardness of his heart continues the same."

"I have talked with him, Sir," she replied, "according to your advice, and his words shewed it too plainly. I would have begun immediately upon my return to him, but he would not let me, and complained of being weary and drowsy. So he took the remainder of your wine, Sir; and fell asleep. But ah! what sleep! Such restlessness, such startings, such cries! Never shall I forget it, Sir. Yet, I thought, if it pleased God to scare my poor father with horrid dreams and visions, the impression might remain when he waked, and might do him some great good. And at first it seemed, Sir, as if it would have remained; for he turned his face about with signs of alarm, and searched every corner of the room within the reach of his eye, again and again, with a hurried look; and at last when he saw *me*, he cried, 'Is it *you*, girl? Is there nobody else here but *you*? I thought—but it is no matter; it was all a dream.'—'Not a creature has been here,' I said, 'dear father, to disturb your sleep. I am sorry that your dreams have troubled you so.' 'Have troubled me so, girl?' he said angrily. 'What dost mean? How dost know that they troubled me? I did not tell thee *that*.' 'No, dear father,' I answered; 'but when you told me, that you had been dreaming, and I saw myself how uneasily you slept, I concluded that your dreams had been bad. But never mind, dear father; I think I know how you may get good dreams in future.' 'How is *that*, child?' he enquired eagerly.—'Why, dear father,' I said, 'there was one thing, which the good Doctor read to you, and which I remember best, because it begins

the morning service ; and it is so full of comfort, that it might well be always in our thoughts ! ' What is it, child ? ' he asked impatiently. ' It is *this*, dear father,' I answered—' When the wicked man turneth away from the wickedness that he hath committed, he shall save his soul alive.'—' What ? ' he cried out with anger ; ' dost thou too join in accusing thy own father and calling him a wicked man ? Let me hear no more from thee about such matters. The Doctor may think that he has a right to talk to me in that manner, and to try to frighten me ; but thou hast none ; so hold thy peace.'—' Ah ! dear father,' I said, ' forgive me ! It is all because I love you.'—' Well, well,' he answered much more gently ; ' I will not be angry, if you say no more.' Thus I was stopped, Sir ; and for *me* to make any more attempts will be impossible ; but I hope *you* will, Sir." " I will certainly," I said, " be the event what it may. Expect me in half an hour." Then she rose in haste ; and, taking the wine which was now ready, she thanked me a thousand times, and curtsied, and hurried away. But ah ! her piety was not rewarded here.

Having stopped to eat some breakfast, I soon followed her, with my Paley under my arm. The mother was in the shop, as usual ; there being nobody but her daughter to whom she could trust the management of it, and her daughter being generally in the sick chamber with her father, since their change of system towards him. As I was passing through, not intending to stay a moment, I just said to Mrs. Marsden, who was engaged with a customer, " I fear your poor husband is getting worse and worse."—" Yes, Sir," she answered ; " it would be a mercy



now, if the Lord would release him."—"God knows best," I said, arresting my step; "if he were to live a little longer, he might perhaps be better prepared to die."—"No," she replied, still going on with her business, "it is not likely, Sir; he is in great pain and uneasiness, and often delirious; he can do nothing more now."—"It is very difficult, certainly," I said, "to do any thing effectual under such circumstances; we should all of us begin to make ready in good time; if we put off our preparation from day to day, and from year to year, it is no wonder that God does not always bless our endeavours on a death-bed."—"What you tell us, Sir, is very true," interposed the customer, who was a poor woman, buying tea and sugar, tobacco, and snuff, and other little articles for the week's consumption; "but there are too many of us, who have no time to think of anything else, except how to keep soul and body together." "O, yes," I said, "you may pray to God continually, either at home, or abroad; you may go to church on the sabbath-day; and you may follow your business in a lawful manner, with industry and honesty, and sobriety; this, my good woman, will be an excellent preparation for death."

They were both silent upon this, and appeared to be conscience-stricken; but the state of things upstairs demanding my first attention, I did not attempt to pursue the conversation any further; and in a few seconds I was at the foot of the sick-bed. A servant-maid, assisting Miss Marsden, immediately quitted the room; she, herself, at my desire, remained. The sick man's face being almost covered with the sheet, as on the first day I saw him, I went round to the side, that I might watch him the better, and speak

to him with less difficulty, and in a lower tone. His eyes were closed, but he opened them when I came close, and sat down on the bed itself; and he said feebly, before I knew very well how to address him, "You are very kind, Sir, in sending me some more of your wine; but it is nearly all over with me now; I shall not hold it much longer."—"Indeed I fear so," I said, marking his voice and countenance; "which makes it a matter of the greater urgency, that not a single moment should be lost. Have you been trying by yourself, since I left you yesterday, to make your peace with God, that he may receive your soul, when it departs from your body?" "My soul, my soul?" he replied incredulously; "what is the soul?"—"Every man," I said, "consists of two parts, the body and the soul—the body after death dissolves into dust, as we know: the soul is immortal; it never dies; it *must* live for ever; so we believe. And we believe also, that hereafter the body itself shall be raised from the dust of death to die no more; that the soul shall be united to it again; and that both of them shall be happy or miserable together throughout the endless ages of eternity. Thus, if I have not told you, Mr. Marsden, what the soul is, I have told you something of much more importance, namely, what is to become of it for ever. Ah! precious, therefore, infinitely precious, must be the worth of your soul! There is nothing, no, not the whole world, which a wise man would receive in exchange for it—for what is the value of all the world to the greatest king when he has left it, and lifts up his eyes in hell? This precious, immortal soul Christ died to reconcile to his almighty offended Father, and to save from everlasting woe. Lay hold

of what he has done for you, by asking forgiveness in his name ; by believing, and by trusting in him. Then shall *your* soul be cleansed by his blood from all stain of sin, even at this the last hour perhaps of your existence upon earth ; and being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, you shall be fitted to dwell amongst the blessed spirits and angels above in heaven."

Much of this was probably not intelligible to the poor dying man, who had so little knowledge of the Christian dispensation ; at all events it had no apparent effect upon him ; and when I stopped, he repeated immediately his former question ; " But what is the soul itself, Sir ? I ask you *that*, and you do not tell me. I should wish to know what it is. Perhaps it is only a name for nothing. Why should I believe that I have two parts of myself, when I see but one ?"—" When God blessed you with health," I said, " and you were employed in the business of your shop, did you not use scales and weights, and various instruments, and utensils of your trade ?"—" To be sure I did ; and what of that ?" he answered, rather impatiently. " Why then," I said, " you can distinguish very readily, cannot you, between the person who uses any thing, and the utensil, or instrument, or thing which is used ?" " Yes," he replied ; " a child may do *that*." " And the thing which he uses can never be the same with the thing which is used ; can it ?" asked I.—" Never, never," he answered ; " why question me in this manner ?" " Be patient, my good Sir, for a moment," I said, " and tell me when you weighed any article in your scales, whether you did not also use something else besides the scales ?"—" Do you mean the weights ?" he enquired.—" Yes," I said, " and besides the

weights?" "Why, both my hands, to be sure," he replied. "How could I weigh any thing without my hands?"—"Well," I said, "and for some purpose or other you used your legs, and the rest of your body; did you not?"—"Yes, yes," he answered pettishly; "my whole body; but what of that? You are wasting your own breath and mine in asking such questions as these."—"I hope not," I said, "but I have done now, at all events; for we are arrived at a most important conclusion for *you*. That the thing used, and the thing using it, must needs be distinct from each other, you saw most clearly; and now you tell me that your whole body is one of the things used for the various purposes of life; inform me, then, what is the thing which uses it? Something distinct and different, it is plain; the body cannot use the body; what is it, I beg of you? it matters not what it be called; only it *must* be another thing. I call it the soul, which is a very good name for it; and thus it appears beyond all possibility of doubt, Mr. Marsden, that you consist of two parts, soul and body, and moreover that the soul is far superior to the body, and uses it as an instrument to do whatever it is capable of doing, according to the mere will and pleasure of the soul itself."

For a while my poor obdurate patient was lost in thought. It seemed now to be proved to him undeniably that he had a soul; and that this soul was the most valuable part of himself; but he had probably no desire to know it; it could only add another and a more bitter care to those which appeared already to torment him. For the soul, being more valuable than the body, might have a different destination from the body, and so might not be swallowed

up and lost in the grave with it. He was dwelling, I think, upon this uneasy reflection; but, whatever it might be, his restless and troubled body betrayed the troubles of his soul. The separation of the two things he must have been conscious of, by his own sad experience, at this very moment; he must have felt the inward mental excruciating pang, in which the body had no concern; and he felt besides the bodily pain, which the restlessness both of body and soul increased. I pitied him during this pause; this crisis, it might be, of his everlasting destiny; but I uttered not a word. I, too, was wrapped in meditation; but I prayed, also; which he, I fear, did not. One prayer; one contrite thought; one pang of remorse, directed upwards, might have reached God's throne, and brought down grace from thence.

But he was obdurate still. His daughter now leaned over him, and wiped away the sweat from his brow, whilst she wetted it again with her tears. He moved her away rather roughly with one of his hands, and at length, with a sort of convulsive effort, demanded for the third time, "But what is this soul itself? you still conceal it from me. If I could see it, as I see my body, *that* would be enough; at least to convince me that there was such a thing as the soul." "But why should you see it," I said, "to be convinced of its existence? Is it not sufficient to feel it, and to be aware of its workings? Did you ever see the wind? Yet you know the wind by the sound, by the touch, by the motion which it creates; and you may know the soul as well, without seeing her, by your own reflections, and by every action and movement of your body. Every reflection is hers alone; she alone thinks; and every

action and movement of the body is caused and directed by *her* ; the body is a wonderful machine constructed with numerous parts for different uses, and with a wire to every part ; she pulls the wires, each as she chooses, and so moves what part she will ; the arm, the leg, the hand, the foot ; no wire can pull itself. And now I tell you that she has nothing of matter, like the body, about her ; and therefore you cannot see her. No matter in the universe is capable of thought ; the soul, therefore, being a thinking substance, is immaterial, and consequently invisible ; she is a pure spirit, and comes from on high from God himself ; he breathed her into man when he first created him ; she derived not her origin from the dust, and therefore she will never return to it ; she is divine, and therefore immortal ; she will live for ever ; just or unjust, she can never perish ; but if just, eternal happiness awaits her ; if unjust, eternal misery. Let this explanation content you, Mr. Marsden ; and let the admonition, with which I finished it, sink deep into your heart. Only, if you tremble at the word just, remember what I say to you, in the name, and by the commission of my great Master, Jesus Christ ; your faith shall do for you what no works can do ; it shall make you just."

Here again, it is to be feared, I was not thoroughly understood ; but I thought it my duty upon this the last occasion, as it seemed, to mix the Christian doctrines of salvation with every other point which he might challenge me to explain ; there was just a ray of possibility that he might challenge me to explain *them* also ; and then their reasonableness, and benevolence, and necessity to men, might perhaps have been made more apparent to him, so as to enlighten

his mind, and touch his heart. But nothing of this kind occurred; nor did he shew any desire to speak or to enquire at all; and thus moment after moment was flying away, irrecoverably, and without a single step being taken towards repentance and faith, God and heaven. Disappointment and grief sat heavy upon me; but at length I recurred to what I had first said, and asked him again, since he was now better acquainted with the existence and the nature of a soul, whether he would not spend the short remains of life in prayer to God to receive his own. "Ah! it will be a fearful thing," I added, "for your soul to meet an almighty offended God, to whom you have never prayed for pardon. If ever you feared a man, fear God millions of times more; for a man can only kill your body, and there his power and his vengeance must stop; but God, after he has killed your body, can destroy both your body and soul together in hell. He therefore is a being greatly to be feared, and most humbly to be adored, and by every means in your power to be appeased."

My tone was urgent and importunate. To escape me the wretched man flew to Atheism, and resumed a portion of his former atrocious impiety. "For what *I* know," he cried, "this may be all a bug-bear to terrify us; how can I ascertain that there is any such Being as God? I know no such thing; nor do I know how to set about to find it out." What am I to do now? I thought with myself. Must I go through the arguments for the existence of a God with this dying sinner, who should be invoking the aid of a Saviour with prayers, and tears, and groans? It is impossible; it is useless, if it were possible; and Scripture he will disclaim altogether. I will

take another course ; so I said, " You suppose then, perhaps, Sir, that, if there were no God, there would be no world, nothing, after this ; neither pleasures nor pain. But I must tell you, (and I am sure you cannot prove the contrary,) that, whether there be a God, or not, there may still be another world, and another life for all of us." " How so, Dr. Warton ?" he enquired eagerly. " Why," I said, " the same fate, or chance, which brought us here, might just as well bring us to exist again hereafter ; and there would be nothing more wonderful in it. If God do not cause and direct every thing, then it must be fate, or chance, which does it ; and you see every day what surprising things happen with respect to other animals and vegetables ; quite as surprising as if a man were to return to life. But do you know what I mean by fate, and chance ?" " Not very well," he answered. " Then I will tell you," I said, " in a very few words, which will be enough perhaps for our present business. Chance, indeed, you probably do understand sufficiently already ; but then if you do, you will never admit it, I am sure, as causing and directing all that you observe in the world ; and so chance must be given up altogether.—Is not chance, or what you mean by it,—something very irregular, and uncertain, and often contrary to your expectations ?" He allowed it. " But *that* is by no means the course of things even here," I said ; " the sun, for instance, and the moon, which are of so great use to us ; are any of their great laws at all irregular, or uncertain ? Do they ever rise or set at unexpected hours ? In short, do we not know long before all about them from our almanacs ? A cloud, indeed, may come between the sun and us, and keep



off some of his light and heat from us ; and you might at first think *that* to be a mere matter of chance ; but do you really suppose that a single cloud ever floats in the air without a cause of its being *there* ? " No, to be sure I don't," he answered. " Well then," I said, " it seems that we shall get rid of chance, as I mentioned before, altogether ; for nothing happens without a cause. In truth chance is only a name for our own ignorance ; we do not know what causes are at work to produce this or that effect, and so we say foolishly that such things happen by chance ; but now you perceive it is not so, in natural things at least. And how is it in the affairs of men ? Just the same. There is a vast deal which takes place, with as much regularity, and certainty, and as agreeably to our expectations, as in natural things ; but on the other hand there is a vast deal also, which looks like mere random chance. A tradesman, who understands his business, and never neglects it, and is honest in his dealings, and spends nothing viciously or unnecessarily, being both sober and frugal, will prosper, and flourish, and get rich ; *that* is the great law of human affairs, like the rising and setting of the sun. But now and then comes a cloud ; his house and all his goods are destroyed on the sudden by fire ; he is plundered by thieves, or by an invading army. Not that these things really happen by chance ; but only that he knows nothing about them beforehand, and so calls them unlucky chances ; they have their certain causes just like other things, but he is ignorant of them. However, be it as it may, what do I infer from all this ? Why, that, under whatever ruling influence we live, give it any name that you please, it is so regular, so certain, so con-

formable to our expectations, nothing could be more likely than it should still follow us, after we die, and reproduce us in another state, as it does thousands of other things; provided only, that there be some purpose, which has not been accomplished, and could not well be accomplished, in the present state. And any reflecting person *must* see, that this is precisely the case with men—the purpose evidently is, to reward and to punish them according to their actions in this world; but the execution of the purpose being only begun, and not completed here, we have good reason to believe that it will be completed hereafter. The tradesman, whom I described, was suddenly deprived of his natural reward in this world, by causes over which he had no controul; but the irregularity may be, and most probably therefore will be, corrected in the next. On the contrary, the tradesman, who is idle, and drunken, and a spendthrift, is reduced to poverty, and afflicted with disease besides; *that* is his natural punishment here; but he gains a large prize in the Lottery, suppose, and his poverty at least is at an end, and with it a part of his punishment; the full punishment therefore may be, and most likely will be paid him hereafter. You cannot give a reasonable account of human affairs in any other way than this; if there were not a future state for us all, there would be a beginning, and no ending of anything; or rather there would be a wise beginning, and a very unaccountable and unsatisfactory ending. I conclude, therefore, Mr. Marsden, whoever, or whatever it may be, that directs everything, being so wise as we see it to be, and yet not complete, on account of the vast variety of circumstances entangled with each other in this world, it

will pursue us into another world ; and, consequently, there is no use, and no real comfort to any man in the supposition, that there is no God. It is merely doing away with a name. This that I have now explained to you, which rules nature with such regularity, and begins to reward and punish men in this life, and which you cannot by any means get rid of, is the very God, with whom we have to do now, and shall have to do hereafter."

Here I stopped to consider where I was ; and I must own, that all which I had just said, now that I think coolly about it, may reasonably appear to any of my readers to be exceedingly flat and dry, and even totally unadapted to the awful case before me. If so, my Brethren of the Clergy, who are thrown into the same trying circumstances, must guard against my errors, and devise some more auspicious proceeding. But at all events they will perceive how I was led on to this mode of argument ; and I can assure them, that, although it produced no ultimate good effect that I am aware of, it was listened to by this poor man with more attention than almost anything else, and seemed to open to his view what he had never dreamt of, or reflected upon in his whole life before. But the question of fate, which I had also promised to discuss, I determined, in this stage of the transaction, not to handle, if I could possibly avoid it ; both, because I was sure that it would be too difficult for him, and, because I feared that it might only put new objections into his head. Besides, if the explanation were managed and succeeded ever so well, it could not carry us a single step beyond the point to which we had already advanced ; namely, that under whatever system of things

we were now living, a future state of rewards and punishments was both possible and probable. What followed led us away, as I wished it might, from all further thought about fate and necessity, and their kindred odious nonentities.

After a pause, observing him apparently thoughtful, and shewing no disposition to speak, I said, " You seem to be struck, Mr. Marsden, with this representation of things, as being something quite new to you, and also the true state of the case. Suppose, therefore, by reasoning deeply upon the subject, you had brought yourself to think, that there must certainly be a future state of rewards and punishments; and then you opened the Bible at the part called the New Testament, and found there a full account of this future state, and how astonishingly great those rewards and punishments would be, and that they would be eternal; moreover, what is of still more importance to you, suppose you found there, as you would undoubtedly, a most gracious method revealed to you, by which you might obtain that wonderful happiness, and, although a great sinner, escape that terrible punishment; what would you think?—what would you say? Would you not at first be overpowered with joy and gratitude, and absorbed in speechless amazement? And would you not afterwards, when the power of uttering your feelings returned, exclaim with a devout fervour, and with every faculty springing forward to embrace the proffered terms; would you not exclaim, Lo, here I am! An alien once, but now thy servant, O God, henceforth! I have lived hitherto without thee! Now I know thee and thy blessed Son, whom thou sentest into the world to preach glad tidings. They are

such to *me*, and thankfully do I accept *him* as the Saviour of all sinners, of whom I myself am the chief. May this knowledge of thee, and this acceptance of thy Son, be to *me*, I beseech thee, that which thou hast promised, the gracious means of eternal life."

Thus I led the way to this miserable man, and endeavoured to put into his mouth a right confession of faith, as well as to infuse right principles and right feelings into his heart; and to work upon anything ingenuous, which might still remain in his nature, however corrupt and debased by sin; but it seemed to be labour in vain: he was quite callous, as far as I could judge, and resolved to brave everything, come what may; not that he now believed that Christianity was false, or that there was no God, or that he had no soul, or that there was no future state; but, be these things as they might, he was reckless of the event to himself; a sort of brutal senselessness had seized upon him, which he would not, or could not shake off; or rather, perhaps, it was a hardness of heart, which God had inflicted upon him judicially, by withdrawing the Holy Spirit, and abandoning him to himself.

After a short silence, which Mr. Marsden did not appear inclined to break, although his restlessness, as on former occasions, betrayed his inward trouble, I said to him, with a soothing tone, "Ah! my good Sir, why will you not tell me the real state of your mind? What is it which oppresses you, and prevents you from receiving the glad tidings of salvation for sinners? If you have but hinted at a difficulty, I have immediately explained it; if you have more difficulties, I intreat you to let me hear them, and

with God's help I will explain *them* also with equal ease. Keep nothing back from me, I beseech you, as if I were praying for myself. You might yet be convinced, and your soul might yet be saved, if you would but open your inmost thoughts to me without delay. God still blesses you with the light of reason to understand what I say to you ; but darkness is coming on apace. It has already overspread you partially twice or thrice ; the next time it may be total, and final. O use the light, whilst a gracious God permits you to have it ! You have confessed, that your system of life has been wrong, so far as respects the present happiness, and the possible perfection, of a man in this world ; will you not also confess that you have thereby offended God, who is the Maker of man, and the Author of all his capacities ; and that, by offending him, you have justly exposed your soul to perdition in the next world, when your trial is over in this ? Why do you hesitate to take this second step ? You would feel no shame in confessing to a fellow-creature that you had offended him, if you had really done so ; do you feel shame in confessing such a thing to God, who is the kindest and most merciful of all parents, and who corrects you, not as too many earthly parents correct their children, for their own unnatural pleasure, but for *your* great, and unspeakable, endless good ? What satisfaction, what peace, what delight must it pour into the breast, to confess to such a parent, who waits to be gracious, and longs to forgive ! Who would not run to him the moment after the offence, and, humbling himself before him, cry out with affection, mingled with sorrow, Father, almighty, but most merciful Father, I have sinned against thee, and am no more worthy to

be called thy son—O spare me from the wrath which I deserve! Thou *hast* spared me, and I am yet in the land of the living to praise thy forbearance and goodness—O receive me back into thy love! I ask it of thee, in *his* name, who died in my stead.”

Thus I spoke; and, whatever force could be added to argument and entreaty by the apparent sincerity and zeal of the speaker himself, it was added now. I was quite exhausted, and seemed, on every account, incapable of any thing more. The amiable daughter had never ceased, from first to last, to shed abundance of tears, and, as often as the unbending spirit of her father resisted the plea by which she herself was melted and subdued, she intermingled with her tears the loud sighs and sobs of an overcharged heart. At the present moment they burst forth with redoubled anguish; because, perhaps, she considered this to be the final attempt; and she saw, by the countenance and the hesitation of her father, that it would be, like the rest, without success. With a look of stern severity, but without speaking to her, he rebuked her for these earnest expressions of her grief; and then, turning his haggard face towards *me*, he said, though with a faltering voice, “ Dr. Warton, all this is but to vex and torment us both; you *may* be satisfied, I should think; you have done more than your duty, although you have not done what you wished; you have troubled me, but you have not changed me; I am the same to the last, as I told you that I should be, and you would not believe me. Leave me now to myself, to abide the event quietly; I shall soon know it, if I ever again *know* any thing.”

The meaning, although not the tone of this declara-

tion, was plain and decisive ; and it was the last thing which I heard him speak. Two or three minutes elapsed before I could answer him, which were spent, partly in soothing his daughter, and partly in collecting and composing myself. When this was accomplished, awe pervading my whole frame, I said, with an air of resignation, " God's will be done then, Mr. Marsden ! You are yet in his hands ; and by his mighty power, he can yet turn you and mould you afresh, if it seem fit to him not to make you a vessel of wrath, nor to break you in pieces, and doom you to destruction. But I shall not think that I have performed every duty belonging to my station, until I have knelt down with your poor weeping daughter, and commended your spirit into the hands of your great Creator, and most merciful Saviour, and have besought them that it may be precious in *their* sight, although you are careless of it yourself."

Upon this we knelt down by the bedside ; and whilst I was opening my book, the sick man closed his eyes, not to listen with undivided and unbroken attention, but to keep himself, I believe, quite passive, and as free as possible from all danger of interrupting me, or treating me with incivility. I surmised before, that this was the whole alteration in him which my labours had produced, and that surmise was, I think, now verified.

The prayer in our Visitation-service for a sick person, when there appeareth small hope of recovery, came nearest, of any authorised prayer which I recollected, to the present uncommon and distressing case ; but still it was very widely remote from all its peculiarities.—I had marked in Paley, at the 416th page, a prayer for one who is hardened and impeni-



tent—I determined to embody the two together, and I did it nearly in the following manner; but I fear to no useful purpose.

“ O Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, our only help in time of need; we fly unto thee for succour in behalf of this thy servant, who is visited with thine hand, and the time of whose dissolution draweth near. Look graciously upon him, O Lord, and prepare him against the hour of death. Thou turnest the hearts of men as thou pleasest; thou hast mercy on whom thou wilt have mercy, and whom thou wilt, thou leavest to their own blindness and corruption; O be merciful to this dying man, and take from him all ignorance and hardness of heart. Open thou his eyes that he may see the wonderful things of thy Gospel; strengthen him inwardly with thy grace and Holy Spirit; give him unfeigned repentance for all the sins and errors of his life past, and steadfast faith in thy Son Jesus; that his pardon may be sealed in Heaven before he go hence and be no more seen.

“ It is the foolish pride of our nature to be unwilling to acknowledge our faults and confess our offences against thee; but do thou teach him, and enable by thy grace to cast off this vain, ungodly feeling; give him a deep sense of his own unworthiness; shew him the beauty of holiness which has so long been hidden from his eyes by the deceitfulness of sin; take from him his stony heart, and give him a heart of flesh; thou, who alone canst revive souls which are dead in trespasses and sins, hear these our prayers for our unhappy brother, who seems to be on the very brink of destruction; pity him who appears to have no pity upon himself, and upon whom all

means to lead him to repentance have been tried in vain ; awaken him, we most humbly beseech thee, awaken him out of this fatal slumber, that he may employ himself in things which will make for his everlasting peace ; and at last receive him into thy blessed eternal kingdom, through the mediation and intercession of thy son, Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Having by a great effort performed this trying service, I rose, and departed with haste ; leaving the sick man with his eyes still closed, and his daughter upon her knees. Mrs. Marsden was very busy with her customers, and so I passed unheeded into the street ; and I was glad that I met nobody in my way homeward to mark the dejection of my countenance, or to interrupt the sorrowful course of my meditations.

This was Saturday. On Sunday, being always much occupied and much fatigued in consequence, I rarely visited the sick, except I was sent for, or they were near at hand and in extraordinary circumstances. I might have gone to Mr. Marsden, and ought to have done so, if there had been the very least glimmering of hope ; but a message had arrived to tell me that he was almost constantly delirious. However a second message arrived, about nine o'clock in the evening, to invite me to come to him, which I obeyed immediately, supposing that a fresh situation of things had arisen, in which I might possibly be useful. I took Paley with me.

The maid-servant let me in, and lighted me up stairs. There were several persons in the room about the sick-bed ; the wife, the daughter, and others ; amongst whom, as I found afterwards, one was his brother. Having cast my eyes around upon them, and nobody speaking, I looked next to the wretched

man himself, who was also looking towards *me* with wild, but melancholy glances. And now and then he made a sort of convulsive effort to raise himself up, in which his wife and daughter assisted him ; but immediately his pressure upon them became so heavy, that they laid him gently back again upon his pillow. In these struggles he stretched out his hands towards the bottom of the bed, as if he would have reached somebody there. I was there myself ; and thinking that perhaps I was the person whom he might wish to be near him, I came round to the side, and touching one of his hands, I said, " Is God so gracious to him, as still to indulge him with the use of his reason and his speech ? " To this question the daughter, choked with her grief, was totally incapable of returning any answer ; but it was answered by the mother, who was much firmer ; because perhaps she was not equally convinced of her husband's extreme peril in this world or the next. " He seems, Sir, to be in his senses, but he has lost his speech entirely. " " Then we can do nothing but pray for him, " I said ; " or with him, if God will give him a heart to pray. Talking with him is impossible. "

Upon this we all knelt down, except the mother and the daughter, who supported him, one on each side of the bed ; and I began with the commendatory prayer, as I did not know but that he might die immediately. Afterwards, being of opinion that he would live for some short time longer, I turned to page 368, where there is a prayer from Bishop Andrews, for the acceptance of our devotions for the sick ; and when I had read it, I proceeded regularly from page to page as far as 384 ; leaving out, and altering, here and there, according to my own discretion ; and

sometimes, as different circumstances arose, making pauses of considerable length. When I came to page 384, about an hour upon the whole had elapsed.

During this painful interval none of the by-standers attempted to speak a word, but Mrs. Marsden. In one of my pauses, occasioned by a peculiar agitation of the sick man himself, which she interpreted to be an expression of terror, she pitied him, and said that he need not be so much alarmed; for that many people had gone out of the world, who had spent much worse lives. To this I answered nearly as I had done in the case of the kept woman and Mr. Maddox; not assuming that Mr. Marsden was really alarmed for himself, of which I was not sure; but only that he ought to be, if he was still impenitent and unbelieving, whether he were better or worse than others. In another pause, occasioned in a similar manner, she said, that her poor husband had never been an enemy to anybody but himself. I doubted very much about the truth of this assertion, in the way at least that I understood it; but at all events, as I found by experience, that it was a common mode of endeavouring to comfort a dying person, who had destroyed himself by conviviality and drunkenness, I thought it right not to pass it by without due notice; so I said, "Ah! my good Madam, we all of us injure our fellow-creatures in a thousand ways that we are perhaps not aware of. You probably think only of killing, and robbing, and cheating, and slandering, and lying, and crimes of that magnitude; and it may be well, not to have our conscience stung with the guilt of such crimes, when we are going to give up our reckoning to God. But

to take one instance only, which does not seem to be in your mind; how many persons, innocent of any great offence before, may have been ruined by our bad example! If we ourselves had lived sottishly and wickedly in the alehouse, and broken God's sabbath, how many others may we have seduced by our example and encouragement to do the same, instead of supporting their families by honest industry, and remembering the seventh day to keep it holy! But drunkenness and breaking the sabbath seldom end there—they are great offences themselves; but they are also the beginnings of the most brutal profligacy and impiety, and of every horrible crime besides. Supposing, however, that any man's own wickedness had not been the cause of wickedness in others; why, it is true, he might have less to answer for at the tribunal of his judge; but if he has been such an enemy to himself as to endanger the ruin of his own soul, *that* will be enough and more than enough for him to bear, unless he retrieve it by flying to Jesus Christ for help, and by humbling himself under the mighty hand of God. Unless he do this, there is no comfort in thinking that he has been nobody's enemy but his own. If it were true, would *that* save him? But it cannot be true. Such wickedness must have endangered the ruin of many, besides himself; and *he* will have to answer, both for himself, and for *them* who fall by his means. But your poor departing husband, I hope, repents in his heart, although he cannot tell us so with his tongue. I trust, though *we* do not hear him, yet he calls upon his Saviour in the secrets of his own breast. God grant that he is doing so!" I exclaimed, clasping my hands with fervour; and the dying man, aroused by the energy of

the supplication, turned his head quite round, and fixed his eyes wistfully and mournfully upon me ; but then, a spark of hope kindling within my bosom, I reiterated with tenfold earnestness, " God grant it ! God grant it ! " and I could utter no more.

At this instant he raised himself with greater force than he had ever done before ; and reaching further with his hands towards the bottom of the bed, his brother grasped them in his own, and thus supported his whole weight in this extraordinary attitude. But soon his head began to droop ; his eyes were twisted almost out of their sockets ; and his wife and daughter screaming aloud, and receiving him back again into their arms, he expired with a single but a terrible groan. He was dead, and his eyes were suffused with dimness ; but they were wide open, and protruded far and horribly. Some one at a distance cried out, " Close them immediately ! " Mrs. Marsden wrung her hands, and started back with a superstitious dread, and exclaimed fearfully, " I cannot do it ! " The daughter had covered her face with her apron. The brother was standing with mingled amazement and doubt. I rose from my knees, and with my fingers pressed his eyelids downwards, until, at length, after two or three trials, they continued shut for ever. Then I said, falling again upon my knees, " Let us all pray to God, before it be too late, to give this unfortunate man pardon and rest ; let us make no unmanly outcries whilst his soul is departing from his body ; let us form no hasty judgment concerning the manner of his death ; but let us lay our hands upon our own mouths, and ask grace for ourselves, that we may live well, and die happily."

A sufficient space having been allowed for this, I rose once more, and retired with haste ; the darkness and silence of the night creating deeper and more awful reflections. But it was to no purpose. Nothing could now be undone ; no step retraced. The tree had fallen, and so it must lie.

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## CHAPTER II.

### JACOB BROCKBOURN.—WARNINGS.

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#### § 1.—*Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Hudson, the Souths, &c.*

ONE afternoon, upon looking over my newspaper which had just arrived from the neighbouring town, I was surprised to see a circumstantial account of a murder reported to have been committed in my parish ; and at first I was strongly inclined to doubt the truth of the whole matter, or at least to feel quite sure, that there was an error in the name. Not that my parish did not abound, like others, with persons who were capable of any wickedness ; (which I lamented, but could not remedy by any human counsel hitherto devised ;) but, when I took so much pains to be acquainted with all occurrences, and so many persons were always ready to communicate every thing extraordinary, and I myself was never out of the way, it seemed incredible that the news of a transaction, so horrible as a murder, should have travelled to the town, have got into the papers, and then come back to *me*, before it had reached me by any other channel. Besides, there were Brockbourns in the parish, and bad ones too ; but I had never heard of any Jacob Brockbourn, as the murderer himself was called. Upon the whole, I trusted, that the pain and the disgrace of so heinous a deed were yet at a distance from us.

However, I sallied forth to make enquiries, and



was very soon disenchanted of my confidence. The story was too true; but it was supposed, that Jacob was a mistake for Joseph; because there was a Joseph Brockbourn, who had well entitled himself to the imputation of a murderer, by his general habits of drunkenness, and stealing, and other depravities. And such a man as Joseph was very likely to have taken up his abode in such a spot as that which was now mentioned to me as the scene of the murder. Thickly peopled as the parish was, yet there were parts of it that were solitary enough; at least, removed from all great roads, and exposed only to the observation of a few of the lowest cottagers. This was one of that description. Towards the remote corner of a wide, extensive, open field, traversed chiefly by foot-paths, there is a small cluster of wretched hovels, with some others detached, and scattered about at various distances. On a Sunday, as I had often been told, this place was usually the resort of the most profligate persons, who brought their liquor and their loose women with them, and pursued their debaucheries, unawed by the appearance of any decent respectable people, or by the fears of beadles and constables. The inhabitants had no communication with any of our hamlets, where the various shop-keepers are collected together; for they were much nearer to a very large village, or rather town, it might be called, in an adjoining parish, where all their daily wants were supplied equally well, and with less inconvenience. So, on the present occasion, the poor sufferer, Brockbourn's wife, was attended by a surgeon from thence, who sent her off, in a very few hours after the calamity, to the nearest hospital; the consequence of which was, that there

was no possibility of inviting *me* to visit her. I have no doubt but this would have been done under more favourable circumstances ; for wicked as these people were, they never failed, if there was time enough, to summon *me* to the sick-bed ; and I have very lately been there day after day, for a long period, to pray with a poor young married woman, who died at length of her lingering disease, after having received the sacrament from my hands. But neither a mournful event like this, nor others much more awful, which I shall, perhaps, have occasion to mention, seemed to have any effect in changing the character of the place. Through all the changes and chances of human affairs, and in spite of a frequent change of some of its inhabitants, it continued uniformly the same. The new-comers either brought with them, or soon acquired the manners of the oldest settlers ; and now to crown the rest of their enormities, a husband had murdered his wife. So at least it was believed. The wife died in the hospital in about four and twenty hours ; the inquest gave a verdict of wilful murder against the husband ; and, in consequence, he was now in prison, awaiting the trial which was to decide upon his character and his life.

This was the result of my first enquiries in my own immediate neighbourhood, and to my great sorrow a splendid opportunity of doing good appeared to be entirely lost. However, I thought it advisable to go, and see what impression had been made upon the rest of the people, and to endeavour to turn this calamity to their improvement. My curate, a young clergyman, zealous in his profession, and anxious for information and experience, together with some

of my children, went with me. They were all indeed desirous of accompanying me upon so unusual an occasion ; for they expected, I believe, both to hear and to see many extraordinary things : but it seemed prudent to leave the little girls at home, as it was quite uncertain, whether circumstances might not occur, in the due execution of my office, which might compel me to use language unfit for their ears, and to suggest ideas likely to contaminate the purity of their minds.

On our way to the cottages we met Mr. Markham, and ascertained two or three facts, which were in some measure consolatory to me ; that it was not my parishioner, Joseph Brockbourn, who stood charged with this deed of horror ; that the newspaper was right in calling the person Jacob ; and that both Jacob himself, and the wretched woman, who had fallen a victim to his fury, were strangers amongst us. In short their legal settlement was at a distance ; but they had got work in the adjoining parish, and had lately come to dwell in ours.

Having arrived at the place, there seemed to be an uncommon stillness and desolation about it. We walked almost round the whole cluster ; not a door was open, not a human creature visible, not a sound heard. Yet it was nearly the hour of dinner, when I might have reasonably have expected to find the entire population of every age and sex assembling together. ‘ Have these people fled, with one consent, from this scene of blood ? ’ I thought with myself. ‘ Or are they all shut up within their dwellings, ashamed and afraid to look upon each other, occupied in silent reflection upon the warning which God has given them ? ’

At length, when we were on the point of completing the circuit, and were nearly opposite to the last house, a woman came out of it; but immediately re-entered in haste, when she saw us, and with an evident design to shun us; although she pretended, as I supposed by her gestures, not to be aware that we were so close to her. She knew me well; we were old acquaintance; but she was a new inhabitant here, and not yet inured to all the wickedness of the spot, and sorry, perhaps, to be found upon it. Instantly I called after her by her name, and she re-appeared with downcast looks, and, without speaking, waited to hear what I might wish to say to her. "You have had sad doings here, Mrs. Cobbold," I said; "there has been murder amongst you I understand."—"Yes, Sir," she answered; "more's the pity."—"Which is the dreadful house?" I asked. "I will shew you, Sir," she said; and immediately she pointed it out. It was the next but one to her own. "Ah!" I cried, "it is very properly shut up, and the windows closed. Who could endure to live in it? Who would wish even to look into it?" "Sha'n't we go in, papa?" said my eldest boy. "I should so like to go in; do let us go in."—"What!" I replied; "do you desire to see the very spot, where the poor creature lay, when her husband in his rage struck her to the ground? Perhaps there is a lake of blood still upon the floor."—"Yes, Sir," said Mrs. Cobbold, "it is just as it was. Nothing has been done to it yet. There is nobody to clean the house—I could not think of such a thing myself."—"I do not wonder at your unwillingness to do this, Mrs. Cobbold," I rejoined; "and I should not be surprised, if the landlord found it a difficult matter to

let this cottage soon to a fresh inhabitant.”—“I would not live in it for all the world, Sir,” she said, earnestly; “and, I believe, I must quit my own; for the murdered woman will never be out of my head whilst I am so near the place where she was killed. Her ghost will haunt us, I fear.”—“God, I hope, has now warned you all sufficiently, Mrs. Cobbold,” I said, “without permitting the poor creature’s ghost to come back amongst you, if indeed he ever does such things, which is not very likely. No, no, it is gone, without doubt, to the abode of all the souls, where God has appointed that they shall remain, till it may please him to call them to judgment. But in what state did her soul leave her body, Mrs. Cobbold? *that* is the awful question. For in whatever state it was at that fatal moment, in the same state will it appear before God, and be judged by him. Where it is gone, it can do nothing for itself, to better its condition. If it went away from this world stained with vices unrepented of, and therefore unforgiven, it will have nothing to do but to lament in vain for the past, and to forebode with fear and trembling, and with too much certainty, a future lot of everlasting misery. Be warned therefore, I beg of you, Mrs. Cobbold.”

She was affected by the gravity and solemnity with which I spoke, but probably she did not understand my doctrine so fully as to derive any great profit from it; and she made me no answer whatever, except by dropping a curtesy, and saying, “Yes, Sir.” “Well, Mrs. Cobbold,” I resumed; “now let me know the particulars of this horrid deed. Having been so near, you, of course, are acquainted with every thing.”—“I will take you, Sir, if you please,” she said,

"to Mrs. Martin. She can tell you, Sir, much better than I can; and she was more of a friend to the dead woman, and was with her most of the time till the surgeon sent her to the hospital." "As you will," I answered, "let us go to Mrs. Martin immediately; I shall have a great many questions to ask her."

Mrs. Martin's cottage was next in the cluster to Mrs. Brockbourn's. Mrs. Cobbold knocked at the door, went in, and told Mrs. Martin aloud, that Dr. Warton, the Rector, was come to enquire about the murder. We all followed, but could scarcely find room to stand. The cottage was small, very dirty, and in great disorder. Mrs. Martin herself was sitting at a table without any cloth upon it, eating something, I did not observe what, and feeding a little sick child that lay upon her lap. Other young children were creeping about on the uneven floor, which seemed as if it had never been scoured or swept; or amongst a heap of soiled linen and clothes, apparently belonging to persons of the lowest rank, which were piled up in one corner, till Mrs. Martin could find time to wash them. 'No wonder,' I thought with myself, 'that the husband dines out! There is nothing here to make home attractive; no comfortable fire-side; no clean table-cloth, nor indeed any table-cloth at all; no food neatly dressed; no fresh-looking, tidy children to sit upon his knee, and stroke his chin, and kiss him, and prattle away the hour. Away he goes, therefore, day after day, systematically to the ale-house, where he finds a blazing fire, good fare, and jolly companions; husbands, that is, who have the same cheerless homes as himself; there he spends a large proportion of his

wages, or perhaps the whole upon his own enjoyments; his children and his wife become ragged, and are ready to starve, and every thing falls into irretrievable ruin. She is the first cause by her own ill management and slatternly habits; and now she feels the sad consequences, in her own person, and in the wants and sicknesses of her children; but she has no skill to remedy them. In despair, it is most likely, she resorts to drinking herself, when she can get a penny for the purpose; degrades herself to a beast, and drags on a miserable existence in filth and nakedness.

Such was the melancholy picture suggested to me by the sight of Mrs. Martin, her children, and her cottage. It is too accurately drawn; it accords with too many of our poor people in every part of the parish; but it was particularly applicable here; and I have no doubt, that the apparent desolation of the place, which at first surprised me, was occasioned by the absence of every man and boy, capable of earning anything by their labour, who had deserted their homes to spend their earnings abroad. It was not their practice, in fact, to eat their dinners at home, except on the Sundays, when such scenes were acted as I have already mentioned, and which naturally led to the fatal catastrophe now under my investigation.

Upon our entrance, and having been told who I was, Mrs. Martin was preparing to rise from her stool with the poor child in her arms; but I desired her to remain, without disturbing herself on my account; and I then asked her at once, what I was most anxious about, whether the unfortunate woman had been able, in the midst of her sufferings, to put up any prayer to God for pardon and mercy.—“I

believe she did what she could, Sir," Mrs. Martin replied. "For some time she only groaned and raved; but when her senses came to her, and I saw the congealed blood upon her head, I told her, Sir, to pray to the Lord to have mercy upon her; for I feared it was all over with her. Pray to the Lord, I said, Mrs. Brockbourn, and he will hear you; you are a sinner, but he has promised not to cast away sinners, if they pray to him." "You counselled her well, Mrs. Martin," I said. "Was the poor creature able to follow your counsel? Did she know how to pray, and in whose name to pray?"—"Ah! Sir," she answered, "it was a hard thing for her to settle her thoughts to pray—I do, I do, Mrs. Martin," she cried; but all was hurry and confusion, Sir. "I do the best that I can, Mrs. Martin; what words should I say?" I would have taught her, Sir, as well as I could; but there were the neighbours running in to see her, and asking her questions; and then came the doctor, Sir; and her pains were very great; and she kept saying, that she was sure she was a dead woman; and every now and then she called for her husband with a grief and anguish which I cannot describe to you, Sir. But I never left off telling her, Sir, to pray to the Lord; so, I hope, she did it, Sir."

"I hope so too, Mrs. Martin," I said, "and I am certain, if she *did* pray, at least if it were in her great Saviour's name, and out of a contrite heart, he would receive her prayer, and offer it up at his almighty Father's throne, and plead for mercy for her. But have we any good reason for thinking that she felt the burden of her sins, and looked to him with faith and trust to ease her of it? Where had she



learnt all this, Mrs. Martin? Could she read herself?" "No, indeed, Sir," she answered; "she was no scholar, nor her husband either; she could not even tell her letters, more's the pity."—"Did she go to any place of worship?" I asked.—"Alackaday, Sir," she replied, "it never seemed to come into her head to do any such thing."—"Then how could she know," I said, "anything at all of the way in which God will be reconciled to sinners, and much less enough of it to apply it to herself, and to use it effectually to her own salvation, in a few short hours, in the midst of the agony of her sufferings, not always in her right senses, raving, as you tell me, and as I can readily conceive, about the horrid deed itself, and about the hand that did it; her husband's hand, which should have protected and cherished her, instead of dashing her to the earth, and inflicting upon her the stroke of death."

"That is very true indeed, Sir," said Mrs. Martin; "and besides all this, she was very tipsy, very tipsy, Sir, I am sorry to tell you, and had been so all the day."—"Ah! Mrs. Martin," I exclaimed with feeling, "and all the rest of you," (for there were now several persons about the door, listening to what passed between us,) "this was a sad condition for a wretched sinful creature to die in! Will it not be a terrible warning to you all? You now see by this great calamity, which has taken place before your eyes, how true is that passage in the Prayer-book, which you have all heard when you have followed your friends to the grave; 'in the midst of life, we are in death!' This poor woman rose with the sun on that unhappy morning, with no fears of her latter end; before another sun rose, she was a corpse, or

next to it ; and how did the will of Providence appoint that she should die ? In a manner the most unthought of, and the least probable, but more horrible than any other which you could have imagined ; by her own husband ! He, too, when he rose on that same unfortunate day, might well have expected to have seen many more with none but the common occurrences of human life. Behold, however, in how short a time he murders his own wife ; he is cast into prison ; and there he lies, awaiting, before he has run out half his days, a violent and disgraceful death ! Will anything make you watchful over yourselves, if this will not, that you may be always prepared to meet your God ? If you were ready, it would not matter how unexpectedly you were summoned. But to be summoned and overtaken in a fit of drunkenness, when you have wilfully destroyed your own reason, and have made yourselves incapable of applying for mercy to your Maker and Redeemer, can there be a greater horror than this ? And will any of you, with such an example before your eyes, ever again venture to intoxicate yourselves with drink ? Such, it seems, was the dreadful case of the unhappy Mrs. Brockbourn ; and what was the case of her husband ? Was *he* intoxicated too ? How was this, Mrs. Martin ?”

“ Indeed, I cannot say, Sir,” she replied ; “ for I did not see him the whole day after the morning. He went out a holiday-making, which was a very unusual thing with him, Sir ; for I reckon him a sober, industrious man ; and perhaps he might have drunk more than ordinary upon such an occasion. But as he did not leave his key with me, which he generally did, I had no reason for seeing him when

he returned. She, poor woman, began to drink very early, and she went to it again in the evening at neighbour Hodges's, and so when night came, she was very far gone in liquor indeed. She passed my house two or three times, after it was dark, and I knew very well, by the noise which she made, what was the matter with her. This was the condition, Sir, in which her husband found her; they quarrelled, and she lost her life, but how I do not know; nor was she herself able to give me any account of it."

"Did you hear them quarrel, Mrs. Martin?" I asked. — "Yes, Sir," she said; "I was gone to bed, and they waked me with their quarrelling. They were at very high words with one another. Then there was a sound as if all the crockery were breaking. But soon I heard a blow, as I thought, and a heavy fall, and a rattling upon the floor, like the dashing of chairs against it, and then some deep groans. Upon which my husband and I both got up, Sir, and put on our things in a hurry, and came down. But some of the neighbours, who had never been to bed, were before us, and they had lifted up poor Mrs. Brockbourn from the floor, and were carrying her up-stairs. *Him* I did not see; he was gone."

"Alas! Mrs. Martin," I said, "this is a very painful story for *me* to hear, even at second hand; what must the fact itself have been to all of *you*, who were upon the spot, and saw so much of it done with your own eyes, and heard with your own ears the groans and the ravings of the unhappy, drunken, dying woman! Is it possible, that you can ever forget such a night of miseries? And will not the judgments of God, so evidently shewn to you, rouse you all to think of your own condition? You may

be as sure that he means this, as if he had told you so by a voice from heaven. Let me ask you, therefore, what part of your conduct have you been striving to correct and amend? What duties, hitherto neglected, have you now begun to perform? which of you, for instance, has been to church, to acquaint himself with God, and to worship him, where he has commanded you to do it? You see now how *he* forsakes those who forsake *him*, and leaves them to their own brutal vices and savage passions, which plunge them into murder, and bring them to die ignominiously on the scaffold. But I will ask you a simpler question; which of you has sent her children to school, that they may be taught there to know their God and Saviour, and how to pray to them for grace and help in time of need? I fear, you have done nothing of this kind; I have seen none of you at church; and I am certain that none of your children are at school. What am I to think of you then, but that you intend to go blindly and rashly on in the very same course, till God sweeps you all away, and perhaps in his wrath, as he has done this poor wretch? How, or where, but at school, are your children to learn to fear God, and keep his commandments, and shun the vices, which have produced this monstrous crime? And how or where, but at church, will you yourselves endeavour to make your peace with God through Jesus Christ, by imploring his assistance, when he is most likely to bless you, in the practice of his holy ordinances?"

This address to them, pronounced with earnestness, appeared to make no small impression; but at the same time it presented only a glimmering of hope to my mind. They held down their heads, struck, no

doubt, with the feeling of awe for the great truths which I had brought before them, and self-convicted by their own consciences ; but with respect to the future, the impression seemed to be one of despair. They seemed to say to themselves, all this *should* be done, but *we* shall never do it ; we cannot do it ; God help us !—My curate told me afterwards, that it appeared to *him*, so thoughtless were these poor people, that the effect of the murder would have been quite worn out of their minds, if we had not paid them this visit, and tried to give them a striking view of it applicable to themselves.

After a short pause Mrs. Martin began to justify herself in this manner. “Alackaday, Sir,” she said, “I never knew that I could get my children into your schools—I have been but three months in the parish, and my husband has but just found work in the brick-fields—I have been all along at sixes and sevens, and if it had not been for this little bit of washing which you see, we must all have starved. For our parish is a great way off, and we were too sickly to go there, when we were most in need. But as soon as I am able to turn myself a little, I will follow your advice, Sir ; I did not neglect those things where I lived last, I assure you.” “Well, Mrs. Martin,” I replied, “I am glad to hear *that*, and I hope you will not neglect such great duties whilst you continue here. But I recommend to you, if ever you change your abode again, not to remain patiently even for a week, without enquiring diligently about the churches, and the charity-schools, and if possible to become acquainted with the clergyman of the parish. This will be for the good of all your souls, and perhaps of your bodies

too : for if their eye is upon you, and they observe the propriety of your conduct, you will have their assistance in every distress ; and, if they are not rich themselves, they will recommend you to those who are. In this parish we have various charities which will be within your reach, if you deserve them ; but there is one which I refuse to nobody ; and I advise you to avail yourself of it whilst your husband is in work.—I have laid in a large stock of coals ; and, by paying me sixpence or more at a time, during the summer and autumn, you will entitle yourself to such a quantity in the winter as will secure you against any danger of a scarcity, or high price of that necessary article, if the season should turn out to be severe. But nothing is of so much importance to you as the schools for your poor children, who, I observe, are numerous ; and, I dare say, if you had thought of enquiring about them, many of your neighbours would have been able to inform you, that they are open to all who will give themselves the trouble to apply to *me*.”

Then suddenly recollecting myself I turned to Mrs. Cobbold, and said, “ Mrs. Cobbold, you have had children in the schools in former times, and I am surprised that you have none there now ; but I presume this melancholy event has convinced you, that to breed them up wild and ignorant is the most likely means of breeding them up to crimes and misery. Alas ! alas ! what little love and affection too many mothers appear to have for their own offspring ! You seem to have no thought that they have souls which must be happy or miserable for ever ; and therefore you take no care about it—you bring them into the world, and leave all the rest to chance ;

or rather, I might say with perfect truth of thousands of you, you bring them into the world only to make them miserable, both here and hereafter. And will God, do you think, suffer such conduct to go unpunished? Assure yourselves not. If you have any feeling, he will punish you in this world, by making you the eye-witnesses of your children's crimes; you will see them grow up to be drunkards, thieves, and murderers; but if your hearts are too hardened to be touched with grief on these accounts, remember what awaits you in the next world! Tribulation, and anguish, and pain, and fire to all eternity."

Here I stopped, and Mrs. Cobbold, being alarmed or ashamed, began to excuse her conduct by saying, that sickness had first been the occasion of withdrawing her children from school, and that, now they were recovered, she had thought of asking my permission to send them again, and had only delayed to do so from the want of a good opportunity. "Well," I said, "then let them be sent next Monday; but why did you not mention the schools to Mrs. Martin, who is a stranger amongst us? It would have been a kind, neighbourly act in you to have done it, when you saw that she had so many children, running about in idleness, and sure to learn mischief, without the chance of learning anything good."

Mrs. Cobbold looked as if she could find nothing to say to this. It was manifest that the thing had never once come into her head. However, at this moment Mrs. Martin herself interposed, and pretended at least to be glad, that there was a possibility of having her children taught to read and write, free of all expense. It was her chief wish too, she said, that they should be brought up "in the fear of the Lord,

to be vessels of honour." These were good, scriptural expressions ; but when taken in conjunction with the rest of her style, which my memory does not now enable me to catch sufficiently, I thought they twanged a little of the conventicle, and I found afterwards that my curate had made the same observation. However, I made no remark upon the circumstance at present, but said, " Yes, indeed, Mrs. Martin, *that* is the main thing, to have your children become vessels of honour ; and the first step towards it, if you would set about it rationally, must be, to teach them to read and understand the Bible, which is the word of God, and in which alone is to be found the way to salvation. Well, we will do this for you, if you will let us, and free of all expense too ; except indeed one expense, that you must take the trouble to send them to school clean and tidy ; with their hands, faces, and heads well washed ; and their hair thinned, cut short, and combed. When I look at them in their present state, I cannot commend you, Mrs. Martin ; nor do I wonder to see them so sickly, when you keep both *them*, and your cottage, in so unwholesome a condition. Cleanliness is the great road to health. I pity these poor children ; they seem as if they had always lived, like gypsies, in the dirty lanes and gravel-pits. And I will tell you another thing, Mrs. Martin, that you will never have your husband's company at dinner, whilst your cottage continues as it is now."

Mrs. Martin was sensibly affected with this exposition ; but, poor woman, as she looked ill herself at the present moment, and seemed to have very delicate health altogether, (her complexion was sallow, her brow oppressed, and her tone feeble,) and more-



over, because it appeared that she had shewn a kind attention to the murdered woman, I relaxed a little, and soothed her by saying, "But you are excusable, Mrs. Martin, I perceive, in some degree, on account of your own health, which, I fear, is not good. If it should please God to restore you, I have no doubt but that I shall see things in better order. The first thing, however, is to send your children to school, and it will be some relief to you merely to have them out of your way; but a great comfort besides, I should hope, to think that they are training up to be Christians, and good members of the community."

Mrs. Martin having assented to this, I now asked her, if poor Mrs. Brockbourn had any children, and if so, where they were. "She had none, Sir," she answered, "by Mr. Brockbourn; but she had two before her marriage with him; a girl and a boy. The boy lived with them; and, because he works in the same brick-field with my husband and son, I keep him here, and find him a lodging for the present, till we see the end of the business." "How did this dreadful deed affect him?" I asked again. "Ah! Sir," she replied "he is giddy and thoughtless; and he has seen such constant drunkenness, and quarrelling, and fighting, in this neighbourhood, that he knows no better, and thinks nothing of it. He was asleep upstairs, Sir, when the thing happened; but the disturbance soon waked him. However, Sir, whilst I was by, he took very little notice of his poor mother, and she the same of *him*. He is very ignorant, Sir."—"Yes," I said; "and I now entreat all of *you*, who are mothers, to mark the consequences. The wretched boy is utterly ignorant of everything good; even natural affection is stifled

within him; and he can bear, without being moved, to behold the horrid scene of a mother, his own mother, dying by the hands of her husband, and going up from a drunken revel to stand before her judge. Of a last judgment indeed, and of what is necessary to enable us to pass it without an eternal condemnation, I suppose, he has never heard; no, nor perhaps of a God or Saviour either, except when impious or drunken men, yes, his own mother too, have profaned and violated their holy names by oaths and imprecations. Such scenes as this therefore are his natural element; and he does not wonder at them, nor feel, even though one that ought to be so dear to him is the unhappy sufferer. You that are mothers, would you wish your sons to treat you thus, or to be the props of your old age, and at last to close your eyes with dutiful honour, and tender love? I see by your countenances what you would wish; but then I tell you, that, to obtain your wish, you must bring them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord, and by the excellent pattern of your own behaviour, they must learn to esteem and reverence you."

I paused here; but observing that nobody was preparing to answer me, I enquired about the girl. "She is much older than the boy, Sir," said Mrs. Martin, "and is in a very respectable service. The sad news soon found her out, and she came here out of breath, crying and wringing her hands the next morning: but she was too late to see her mother, who was already gone to the hospital; so, without waiting a moment here, Sir, even to rest herself, or to learn the particulars, she hurried away after her as fast as she came, and I have since heard that she

was just in time before her poor mother died. She has always been a good daughter, Sir."—"It is very agreeable to me," I replied, "to know this, Mrs. Martin; and I hope that she had both the inclination and the strength to follow up what you so properly began, and to put into her dying mother's mouth the prayer of a broken and contrite heart. But how came she to be so different from her brother? Had she been to school anywhere?"

"I can tell you all about it, Sir," said Mrs. Martin; "for I heard it from the young woman herself, one day not long ago, when she called to visit her mother; and her mother not being at home, I asked her to step into my cottage, and sit down, which she did: and so we fell into talk, Sir, about her place, and other matters. She was at school for several years at the expense of a kind friend; and being much noticed there for her good reading and working by the ladies of her village, they afterwards put her out to service, as an under nursery-maid, where she had time to read her Bible, and was regularly sent to church. So she improved herself there, Sir, in every way; and when she became above her situation, the family recommended her to the place in which she now is, as housemaid, where she gets great wages, and is much respected. She has done a great deal for her poor mother, Sir, often and over again, which she liked better than laying up for herself."

"Well," I said, "this is a refreshing story, Mrs. Martin, after the other; and, I suppose, you all observe that it was God's blessing upon the education at school which produced these good fruits; so I trust you will put yourselves in the way of receiving

the same blessing. But now tell me which of these cottages belongs to Hodges." They pointed it out to me. "Why *that* is the same," I exclaimed with surprise, "in which the poor young woman, the bird-catcher's wife, died after so tedious an illness, and whom I visited so often." "Yes, Sir," said Mrs. Cobbold, "Mr. Hodges took it immediately after her death, and he has lived there ever since." "Then it was there, no doubt," I said, "that Mrs. Hodges, his own wife, died so suddenly, and so awfully?"—"The very same place indeed, Sir," she replied. "Ah!" I said, with solemnity and feeling, "that you were all of you so heedless and blind as not to perceive God's providence at work amongst you! He has warned you again more terribly; and if *you* despise him, or neglect him again, what shall he do next? He shall do something at which both the ears of those who hear of it, though at a distance and unconcerned themselves, shall tingle."

When I had uttered this vehement sentence, to which I was incited chiefly by the supposition that the fatal merry-making had been held in this very house, being quite sure that I could say nothing else so likely to come home to their understandings and feelings, I walked away in haste with my party, and knocked at Hodges's door; but there was not a single creature of so numerous a family within. He was a dustman, and was abroad, as I learnt, with all the rest of them; at least with as many as could trudge along by the sides of the carts and horses; and the younger ones were crawling about, and picking bramble-berries from the hedges, to appease their hunger till his return, which was not expected to be before night, as he had ranged away into a distant

parish. I had very lately cherished some hopes of reforming this man. His wife had led, according to report, a profligate life, and had died unexpectedly by an attack of palsy. I met him in my walk soon after the calamity, and before the funeral; and I used every endeavour to bring such a tremendous event home to his heart and conscience. The hurry and confusion of the moment, he said, had prevented him from sending for *me*; but his poor wife, he added, had herself called for a Bible in her last agonies. "Ah!" I exclaimed, "her eyes were opened by the terrors of her situation, and she saw clearly what was most needful for her. She had been sleeping on the brink of a precipice, which hung over eternity; it gave way on the sudden, and down she plunged, and you perceive what she caught hold of to save her. Will you be taught by this tremendous lesson to catch hold of the same thing in better time, whilst you are strong and healthy, and before you take the same fatal plunge yourself?"

Hodges was not a man of many words; but he shewed, in a variety of ways, that he was deeply impressed at the moment with what I had said to him. However, I had not seen him at church; and now I was thrown into despair by supposing him to be the author and promoter of a riotous party, which terminated in murder. But I soon discovered, that of this at least he was guiltless; it was not he, but Hodges the younger, his newly married son, who had a house in the same cluster. This I learnt at a single cottage which stood at a short distance aloof, the mistress of which was standing at the door with an infant in her arms belonging to the elder Hodges. For his wife had been cut off soon after

child-birth; and, on account of his large family, this infant was put under the care of his neighbour, Mrs. Hudson, at the expense of the parish. Mrs. Hudson herself was very decent in her person and manners, and had every thing very tidy about her, with a handsome-looking clock, and other furniture not commonly to be seen now-a-days amongst the poor. She had been educated in the charity-school before my incumbency, and could probably read and sew as well as poor Mrs. Brockbourn's daughter; but she had faults, which occasioned frequent punishments, and at last her parents, who were none of the best, took her away before she had completed her proper time. Since this many years had now elapsed; for she was married, and had a daughter of her own, who had also been in the charity-school, but was lately withdrawn, for what reason I had never yet ascertained.

"Well, Mrs. Hudson," I said, when I came up to her door, "is this the poor child that Mrs. Hodges left behind her, when she was snatched out of the world so unexpectedly and awfully?"—"Yes, Sir," she answered, "it is the very same. Will you walk in, Sir, for a few minutes, and sit down?"—"By all means," I said; "it is a pleasure to me to come into your cottage, Mrs. Hudson; I always find it so clean; and if I sit down upon one of your chairs, you need not dust it first, as others do when they invite me to sit. But pray, tell me, has Hodges so soon forgotten his calamity as to have opened his house to these drunken people, and thereby to have been the cause of a murder?"—"Oh! you mistake, Sir," she replied with quickness; "the merry-making was at the next door round the corner."—"Who

lives there?" I asked eagerly. "Why it is John Hodges, Sir," she answered, "his eldest son, who has been lately married, or pretends that he is; for nobody knows where the marriage was performed. Did not you see his wife, Sir, that flaunting young woman, with her hair all in curl-papers, who stood amongst the rest at Mr. Martin's door?"—"Yes," I said, "I observed her very particularly, and I thought of asking who she was: but as I went on talking to Mrs. Martin, the thing escaped my recollection; and when I came away, she was gone, I suppose, for I saw no more of her. She struck me very much by her dress and appearance, but still more by her coming and going continually, and by her anxious look, and by the curiosity with which she seemed to listen to what I said. Now I understand the reason; she was deeply concerned, I fear, in the revels which caused this dreadful deed; a deed which will disgrace your neighbourhood for ages. As they go by, men will point to the place, and say with a sort of horror, '*There* a husband murdered his wife! *There* they drink till they are mad, and then cut one another's throats!' But where did this young woman come from?"

"Nobody knows, Sir," replied Mrs. Hudson. "She was one of those that were often here on a Sunday, and then all on a sudden she remained here, and calls herself John Hodges's wife. But some of the neighbours suspect she is no better than she should be." "I will speak to her," I said, "before I leave the place, and give her some good advice, if she will hearken to it. But now tell me what you know of the murder."—"It was my husband, Sir," she answered, "who took Jacob Brockbourn."—

"How was that?" I enquired hastily. "Why, Sir," she replied, "it was at the break of day; he saw him skulking in that field of beans there, (to which she pointed with her finger,) and when my husband called out aloud to him, he ran off as hard as his legs would carry him. But when he began to find that he could not get away, he stopped, and so my husband came up with him, and said, 'Brockbourn, what have you have been about? you have murdered your wife, you villain!' 'Well, take me then,' said Brockbourn; 'I have made up my mind to die for her.' I cannot tell you, Sir, the exact words which he used; for they are not fit to be heard; but they will go against him, when he is at his trial."—"What?" I asked; "did they betoken his guilt?" "I thought so, Sir," she replied; "it seemed as if he confessed that he had murdered her." My own impression was the same, even from the words which she related to me; and, if he used words besides, which implied that he was still full of rage against her some hours after, *that* of course would strengthen the impression in those who knew the words. But as I did not know them at that time, and as the whole matter was capable of a milder interpretation, I thought it just to say, "Why, Mrs. Hudson, he might not have meant to confess the fact of his having murdered her, but only that circumstances were so strong against him, that nobody would believe him to be innocent. This speech, however, and the violent words, if they be anything like what I suppose, and his running away, will all be against him, undoubtedly, at his trial. Yet we should hope he might still be clear of so foul an act. If he was conscious to himself that he intended to murder her, why



did he stay at all? Surely, this circumstance is in his favour. In such a case, most probably, he would not have stayed to see the event, whether she died or not; for he must have thought that, if she recovered, she would certainly betray him, and his punishment would be the same. But if he was conscious that he had no intention of murdering her, then it was very natural that he should stay to see the event. I did not know of his staying before, and I am glad that you mentioned it to me, because it enables me to judge more charitably of him; and I recommend to *you* to do the same, Mrs. Hudson."

"But if he killed her by a chance-blow, Sir," said Mrs. Hudson, "why did he hide himself at all? Why did he leave her, when he saw her bleeding on the floor? Or, if he left her, why did he not call for help, or run for a doctor?" These were certainly very pertinent questions of Mrs. Hudson's, and they disclosed some new facts to me; and it appeared upon further enquiry, that when the neighbours were alarmed by the noise, and began to assemble from the side towards Hodges's, he had slipped out of his house, and, muttering something or other, quite unintelligible, to the nearest person who asked him what was the matter within, he went off on the other side, and threw himself down in the field of beans which was close at hand. "Was he intoxicated, Mrs. Hudson?" I said; "for if he was, it would account in part for the confusion with which he seems to have acted." "Nobody here knows, Sir," she answered; "for he had been out all day, and was only seen for an instant or two, by persons who were very tipsy themselves. But if he was, Sir, it was all worked off, by the time when he was taken,

by the cold night, or by his fears. My husband saw no signs of it."

"The more we consider the transaction, Mrs. Hudson," I said, "the more difficult does it seem to be explained; but one thing, no doubt, we may understand,—that when he saw what he had done, he was smitten with horror, and that his first feeling was to fly from such a terrible spectacle. The sight of his own wife, weltering in her blood, which *his* hand had shed, was intolerable to him. He could not endure it for a moment even, and he rushed out. If he did the deed with a wilful, cool premeditation, he could not bear to look upon it when it was done. If he did it in the sudden fury of passion, yet his passion could hold him up no longer against the cries and groans of his dying wife. He tried to escape from a sound which was terrible to his ears; but his conscience, perhaps, set on fire by the avenging providence of God, burnt within him, proclaimed him to himself a murderer, and arrested him to the spot. Where could he go? He felt that he was deeply branded with a mark, like Cain of old, which neither place nor time could wipe out. Yet once more he was tempted to fly, when the dawn of the day discovered to him the faces of his fellow-creatures; and he remembered, perhaps, what he might have heard in his youth, the tremendous sentence of God upon the murderer; 'Whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.' But he had no power to escape; his fears might have given him wings; but his guilt had bound them in fetters."

Pausing here, I began to doubt whether Mrs. Hudson would apply what I had said to her own use; so I added immediately, "Let these things be

a lesson to us all to curb our passions, to avoid all sin, and to keep up a constant intercourse with God by prayer. These wretched people lived without him in the world, and so he abandoned them to their own depraved lusts, and to the darkness of their own ignorance; but he gave witness of himself tremendously at the last. One has fallen by the hands of the other; how that other will end his life, we do not yet know; but this we know, that 'There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked!'—'The wicked are like a troubled sea, which cannot rest.' And again, 'A wounded conscience who can bear!' You have a daughter, Mrs. Hudson, who was once at school, and promised well; for some reason or other you have withdrawn her. Would you wish her to be brought up in the same ignorance as Mrs. Brockbourn, and to follow the bent of her natural appetites, and so to abandon herself to the same vices?" "No, indeed, Sir," she replied, with some appearance of feeling. "Well then," I said, "but what are you doing with her? Do you let her wander where she pleases, and mix with whom she pleases?" "No, Sir," she answered; "I have kept her close at home, ever since she left school; I am very careful about *that*." "Are you indeed?" I said, not believing her—"Where is she now then?" "Upstairs, Sir," she replied. "Upstairs?" I said, still not believing her. "Call her down; I should like to see her." She called, I thought, with reluctance; but I was agreeably deceived. Down came the little girl, as clean and neat as possible. "Oh! what a pity," I said, "that so nice a little girl should not be at school! Why did you take her away?" "Her mistress used her ill, Sir," she answered. "How?" I asked. "She

broke three of her combs, Sir," she replied, "one after the other." "What combs?" I asked again. Then observing that she wore a comb in her hair, I enquired if they were the same as *that*. "Yes, Sir," she said, "just the same." "Well," I said, "it is rather extraordinary, certainly, that the mistress should break so many combs. She might have thought indeed, that combs were out of place in such a school, and that simplicity was the most becoming ornament, and that by being indulged in the use of combs, your daughter might grow up to be a flaunting young woman, as you yourself very well described Mrs. Hodges; but still I should not have suspected her of breaking the combs, or of anything more than merely taking them out. However, I will enquire about it: but it would be ridiculous to deprive the poor girl of her schooling for the sake of these foolish combs." Then turning to the girl herself, I asked her whether she did not wish to be a nice little scholar and workwoman, and so to get into good places, when she became a woman; and the girl having answered, almost with tears, that she wished it very much, her mother immediately promised to send her again on the following Monday. "Very well," I said, "I shall be glad to see her; and I will tell you another thing, Mrs. Hudson: I want such a trusty little girl, as I consider your daughter to be, to take care of the other children, who are coming from this quarter to school; the Cobbolds, and the Martins, and more, I hope; you have it in your power to do an act of great charity, if you will let her do this; for I am sure, that I shall get several fresh scholars, when the people know that Mary Hudson is to take them and bring them back." "It

shall be done, as you wish, Sir," she answered ; and thereupon I left her.

Our next visit was to old South and his wife, who lived about a stone's throw from the cluster. Here there were four cottages, two and two, back to back. These aged people were sometimes in distress, and I had become acquainted with them by relieving it ; but I lately ascertained, beyond a doubt, that their distress arose from drunkenness. Of the old woman it was the constant habit, and she had ample means of exercising it for a considerable portion of the year ; so ample indeed, that in the height of the season she allowed her husband a pot of porter *per diem* out of her own funds. She was by trade a culler of simples, or herbalist. If you enquired of herself what she was, she would tell you that she was a gatherer of *yarbs* ; and, in her diligent prosecution of this trade, I had often seen her, early and late, in the lanes and fields, poking into the hedges and ditches ; and, I was told, (but it was mere scandal, perhaps,) when there was a scarcity of what she wanted there, if it grew in the gardens, she borrowed from thence without scruple. For it would be a pity, she might have thought, that any sick person in the great town should die for want of a regular supply of these healing *yarbs* ; thyme, or mint, or sage, or balm, or what not. In all trades there are middle men. One of these, in the large village which I have mentioned, took all her stock from her hands, and sold it in the town, and settled with her once a week at his own house. This settling day was always fatal to sobriety ; she let loose the reins to her propensity for drink, and came staggering home and disturbing the neighbourhood with her furious imprecations upon herself and others ; or,

mayhap, being unable to travel, she deposited herself in some ditch, wet or dry, till the fumes of the liquor had evaporated, or her hoary-headed partner had discovered her retreat. Her partiality, however, was not for Geneva, but all for genuine British ale, which betrayed its influence in her purple, bloated face, and dripping eyes.

Such was Goody South; but, as it happened at this time that there were no hop-tops, ground-ivy, and others of the more saleable herbs, and as her husband also was ill, and unable to work on the roads, where he was employed by the parish, I felt quite sure that I should find them both sober. Besides one of them had been to the rectory early in the morning to plead distress, and my answer was, that I would visit them, and enquire into their circumstances at their own house on that very day: so I had a double security that they would have all their faculties about them.

The door of their cottage being open, I just rapped with my cane, and walked straight in at once with my whole party. They were at dinner, and rose immediately; and I have no doubt, that, if it had been possible, they would have removed the nice piece of boiled pork, the plentiful garnish of greens, and the loaf of the finest wheaten flour, which convinced me, as they well knew it must, at the first glance, that there was no present danger of starvation there. But before they could do this, or even speak, I cried out as they were rising from the table, "Sit still, good people, sit still, I beg of you, and enjoy your fare, which, I am glad to see, is so comfortable." "We have done, Sir," they both answered at once, and got away by degrees, sideling as far from the

table as they could. "Do not be uneasy," I said, "at my finding you with so excellent a dinner. I am really glad of it, as I have already told you; it shews, indeed, that you do not want any immediate assistance from *me*; but it shews, besides, that what I heard, with great sorrow, cannot possibly be true." "And what was *that*, Sir?" interposed the old man himself. "You must not trust, Sir, to all that the people tell you." "I never do," I said; "but I must confess, that, in the present case, what they told me seemed too likely to be true; that you spent all your earnings in drink. However, be that as it may, your wife here is a most sad drunkard, I know very well."

Whilst I said this I looked very hard at the old woman, and I thought that she was intoxicated at this very moment; at all events she was so confused as to have nothing to reply to my charge; but, by casting her eyes askance towards her husband, she appeared to expect that he should make some reply for her. Accordingly he said, "She has left it off now, Sir. I cannot deny, but that she used sometimes to take a drop too much, as most people do. We are all of us overtaken now and then, Sir; but she will never do so again, Sir, I know." This little defence did not hold very well together; but I took no notice, and only said, "I wish it may be so, with all my heart; for you have just had a dreadful warning of the evil effects of drunkenness. Would you like to die as Mrs. Brockbourn did? Or, if not by the hands of each other, yet suddenly, and unexpectedly, and disordered by liquor, so as to have none of your senses about you?"

Both being silent, I directed my questions to the old woman, and asked her, if she was aware that

there was to be another world after this was over. She seemed in the same confusion as before, and I supposed besides that her ignorance and stupidity were total. However, I tried to make her comprehend this important matter. "You know, I suppose, that you will one day die," I said. "Yes, yes, Sir," she answered.—"And that you will be buried in the ground, and rot away there as all other things do?" I said again.—"Yes, Sir," she replied, "I know it well enough."—"Well then," I continued, "*that* will be the end of this world to *you*. But now tell me, what is to come after; or whether you know of anything to come after; any new world, or what?" Here she was unwilling or unable to answer me; she looked first at her husband, and then at *me*, but not a syllable did she even attempt to utter. "Then I will tell *you*," I said. "The grave will not make an end of you, although you may rot into dust there. You will rise again from the grave by the great power of God above; he will make you a new body, and you will live again in a new world; and this new world, and this new life, will be all happiness in heaven, or all misery in hell, to all eternity. Do you understand what I mean by eternity? How long will eternity last?"

Thus I questioned her; but she stood like an idiot, and seemed wrapped in darkness worse than Egyptian, or Cimmerian; a darkness impenetrable to a single ray of light. I was shocked that human nature should be degraded so low; and I turned to the husband, who was bowed with age, and wore the grey silvery locks of knowledge, wisdom, and counsel, mature and sage. "But *you*," I said with pain and earnestness, "must surely know what I mean by



eternity? *you know* how long eternity is to last?" "Why, yes," he replied; "they say that it will last for ever and a day, Sir." This definition of eternity was accompanied with a little archness of look, which I could not on the instant interpret; so I only said; "There is no need of the day over and above, Mr. South; if eternity is to last for ever, it will have no end, and there will be no day after it; for nothing can come after *that* which itself does not come to an end at all. Well, Mr. South, this never-ending world will be heaven or hell; are you preparing, and is this poor creature preparing, to get the one, and escape the other?"

He was at a loss what to answer; so I asked him how old he was. "Fourscore and two," he said, "if I live a month longer, Sir."—"And what age is your wife?" I asked again. "Seventy-seven, Sir, or thereabouts," was his reply.—"Ah!" I said, "how mournful and how fearful to think upon! You have one foot in the grave already, both of you, as it appears to *me*; and yet I doubt whether you have, either of you, taken a single step towards a happy eternity. You have put off all preparation for it, till I should fear it is hardly possible for you to make any. That there will be very little time for preparation is certain. An old man, as you are, of fourscore years and two, can you expect another year?"—"Why, my mother, Sir," he said, looking archly as before, and clearly, I thought, intending to quiz me, "lived to be a hundred and three."—"Oh! then," I resumed sharply, but a little disconcerted, "you make sure of twenty years before you?"—"There is no knowing, Sir," he answered. "One may live as well as another."—"But suppose your wife here," I

said, "in a drunken fit, should stab you with that great knife, which lies upon your table, would you be content with such a preparation as Mrs. Brockbourn's, or with no preparation at all? How many foolish persons, vainly expecting length of years, have been cut down in a moment, without time to say, 'God have mercy on our souls!' Was Mrs. Hodges old? She reckoned, no doubt, upon many a day to prepare herself to meet God; and perhaps she was the more bold and confident from remembering, as you do, that her mother or father lived to a great age. But God will not permit such reckonings to prosper. Snap goes the thread of life, and you are at once in eternity; in the next world that will never end. And, I am sure, let your mother have lived to what age she may, your own life hangs upon a very slender thread. You are tottering under your years; you are afflicted with sickness, which God has graciously sent to awaken you; you are a drunkard yourself, and you are under the same roof with this drunken woman. Beware, I tell you, whilst God grants you the power to do so!"

The tone of this speech appeared to succeed so far as to make him serious at least; and I hoped to inspire them both with a horror of drinking, by suggesting the terrible possibility of some fatal blow in the midst of their cups. He adverted to this alone of all that I had said, and asserted confidently, that there was no danger of either of them, doing any harm to the other under any circumstances. "Why?" I asked. "Was not Jacob Brockbourn a quiet, peaceable, sober man? Would any one have guessed beforehand, that there was the least likelihood of his

killing his wife? Yet, drunk or sober, peaceable or quarrelsome, quiet or raging, he killed her, you see. But what is this wretched woman, who seems to be so ignorant and so unconcerned about another world; about hell and heaven? Do you think that I have never heard of her riotous proceedings? of the brawlings to which she is so accustomed, the cursings, the fightings, the breakings of windows, the black eyes, the bruises, the wounds? Oh! shame, shame, shame! Two old people, ready to step into eternity, and yet to lead such a life as this! Ah! you ought to be ever on your knees, lifting up your aged hands towards heaven, and praying for mercy and pardon to come down from thence! But how? You know not in whose name to ask it; you never heard of the blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Well; I can stay no longer with you now. Remember the Brockbourns! Be sober; or your life may not be worth a day's purchase, and you may go to your Judge with all your sins upon your heads."

As I pronounced this I was hastening away; but the old man stopped me for a moment, and said, "I am sure, Sir, I shall never do *her* any mischief, and I know she will not dare to do *me* any. But we are both of us sober people now, Sir; and you shall hear no more of such doings."—"It is high time to leave them off, certainly," I replied, "and to begin to attend your church. When I see *that*, I shall be your friend."

Thus we left them; and, when we had visited two or three more of the scattered cottages, where our chief conversation respected the children, as in the former cases, we returned to the cluster; but not

being able to find Mrs. Hodges, or anybody else belonging to the family, we retraced our steps homewards; discussing, as we went along, the various occurrences of the day, and conjecturing the probable results, which were, however, in the hands of God.

On the following Monday I went earlier than usual to the schools; and there, to my great delight, I saw little Mary Hudson. And, "Well, my good little girl," I said, "how many children have you brought with you?" "Eleven, Sir," she answered, smiling and curtsying, with much apparent self-satisfaction, and pleased also with the idea of pleasing *me*. "Why, you are an excellent girl," I said, "for bringing so many the very first Monday, and I hope you will bring more yet."—"Oh! yes, Sir," she replied, "there are more to come, when they have got shoes and stockings."—"But whom have you brought this morning?" I asked. Upon which she told me their names, and I ordered them out from their classes before me. They were the children of the persons to whom I had spoken, and of some others whom the rumour of my visit had reached. I commended them, advised them to be regular, on Sundays as well as on week-days, promised them rewards if they were good, and then dismissed them to their several places. As the distance was great, and the roads often bad, their parents had wisely determined to send their dinners with them; so you might have seen them continually, with many others under similar circumstances, at half-past twelve in the churchyard, let it hail, rain, or shine, sitting on the graves and tomb-stones, eating their simple fare, and as merry as grigs. It is true, when dinner was done, they fell to jumping over the graves and climbing the tomb-stones, and

scaling the iron-rails which fenced round the monuments ; for they were naturally wild as the roe-buck, and had ranged in pastures almost as wide. And sometimes they broke a tomb-stone, and sometimes one of their own legs ; but this encouraged surgeons and stone-masons, and perhaps brought a fee to the parson ; so it would have been a pity to deprive them of so fine a play-ground. However, in one case, I recollect very well, the rector was a loser by this game ; for a lady, whose husband's head-stone had been broken in this manner, came to me in great wrath, and threatened I know not what vengeance. It happened that the stone had fallen upon one of my best little girls ; one as eager at her play as she was at her book and needle, and had fractured her leg ; so I ventured to intercede for her, and said, " I hope, my good madam, you will consider a broken leg a sufficient punishment." " I wish she had broken her neck !" exclaimed the lady, in a fury.—" *That* is not a very Christian sentiment," I retorted ; " and I am sorry to see you so much irritated upon an occasion, as it appears to *me*, of no great magnitude. But you must allow me, madam, to cut the matter short. Neither I myself, nor the parish, are answerable for the care of the monuments.—We take fees for them it is true ; but that is only for permission to erect them ; and those who erect them must watch over them afterwards, if they wish to preserve them. I will gladly permit you to erect another without demanding a fresh fee, because the broken one was put up during my incumbency ; and all I can do besides is to tell you the name of the unfortunate sufferer, if you are resolved to prosecute her for damages."

Having done this I rung the bell, and she was let

out in a violent huff ; and it seems that she did not soon recover her serenity. The stone she never restored ; and when the collector of my Easter-offerings called upon her according to custom, she refused to give a single doit, and told him, moreover, that she would not herself be buried in my parish, lest I should get any fee by it.

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§. 2.—*Mrs. Martin, John Harwich,  
Mrs. Costar, &c.*

~~This~~ little anecdote may be useful to others as well as to the clergy ; but now I return to graver matters. —As early as I conveniently could, I determined to follow up the impression which had been made in the immediate neighbourhood of the scene of the murder. Approaching the spot on the side of old South's cottage I went there first ; but neither of the two inhabitants were at home. Mrs. Forbes, however, who occupied the adjoining one, upon hearing me knock in vain, came out and gave me a sad account of these wretched people. "It was but yesterday, Sir," she said, "that Mrs. South was drunk to madness, and threw us all into a ferment. I heard, Sir, a good deal of what you told them both but a week ago, and I put her in mind of it ; and it stung her to the quick. But, I believe, I had nearly lost my life by the interference ; for she rushed out of the house with a large case-knife, and pursued me into my own ; and if she had not fallen down upon the sill, luckily for me, Sir, my days had been numbered. I tremble now when I think of it."—"Ah ! Mrs. Forbes," I said, in sor-

row, "you will have another murder here very soon, I fear. See how wicked habits cling to people up to the very last moment! They cannot shake them off if they would. They do not pray to God for his grace, and therefore they can do nothing. But, as to praying to God, you are all alike, I believe, in this ungodly place. Some of you, perhaps, may pray to him in private; but you never, any of you, honour him in public. - Look yonder, Mrs. Forbes," I said, pointing with my cane, "and tell me what it is that you see, rising above the trees, and peering in the sky." "It is the Church, Sir," she answered. "And do you ever hear the bells?" I asked. "Yes, Sir," she replied; "whenever the wind sets this way, and in all calm weather." "But, alas! you never obey their call, Mrs. Forbes," I said; "and yet you have not the shadow of an excuse for your great neglect of God's public worship. You have no young children to nurse; you may be respectably dressed if you will; for both your husband and yourself get full wages, without a family to maintain out of them; and you have nothing to complain of on the score of health. These will be fearful items in your account, when your Judge shall reckon with you." All this was so unexpected by Mrs. Forbes, that she was in an instant quite speechless. She stepped out to accuse her neighbours, and now she found the tables turned upon herself. I gave her a little book to read, and hastened onwards to the rest whom I had seen before, and whom I now commended for the promptness with which they had sent their children to school, and for the regularity with which they kept them there. "Well," I said, "this is the first right step; when shall I have the

satisfaction of seeing you take the next? Will you not come to church?" To this question the greater part made no answer but by hanging down their heads. Two, of whom Mrs. Hudson was one, assured me, that they had been to church in the neighbouring parish at the six o'clock service. Again, none of the Hodges family were at home, except a little girl, sister to young Hodges, and then employed in sweeping out his house. As for his wife, she disappeared, it seems, sometimes for two or three days together; and some of her neighbours, especially old Mrs. South, having lately cast it in her teeth, that her marriage was all a pretence, she threatened to confute their slander by producing a copy of the register. The character of this young woman I found to be worse and worse as I enquired farther into it. One thing appeared to be certain, that, young as she was, she had been a mother before she came here; but the child having died since, she now regretted, as they told me at least, that she had attached herself to Hodges, and had thereby abridged herself of her former unbridled freedom. "She has been wild, Sir," they all said; an expression which I understood too well, and I was the more grieved to be a second time disappointed in my wish of speaking to her.

"Was this the house," I said to the little girl, "in which poor Mrs Brockbourn was drinking, the very night that she was killed?" "Yes, Sir," she answered, "it was here." "And can any body bear to live in this house then?" I asked. "Sir?" she said, staring at me, and evidently neither feeling nor comprehending what I meant. "Would her husband have killed her, do you think," I enquired, "if she"



had not been drunk?" "No, I suppose not, Sir," she replied. "And did not she get drunk here?" I enquired again. "Yes, Sir," she answered. "Then it was the merry-making here, my little girl," I said, "which caused the poor woman's death; was it not?" She was silent; so I asked her, if she thought these merry-makings were things to be desired, being often the causes of very dreadful consequences, and almost always of quarrelling, swearing, and fighting. She was still silent; so I now asked her a plainer question, whether she thought Mrs. Brockbourn would have come there, if she had known that she should be killed afterwards. "No, Sir," she answered at length, "*that* she would not." "Should you not be sorry then," I said, "if you had been the person who persuaded her to come and drink here that night?" "Yes, Sir," she replied. "To be sure," I said, "for you would have been the cause of her death. And would you not have been sorry also, if it had been *your* house, in which she was drunk before she was killed, and in which she was led to drink in such a manner as to cause her being killed?" Again she was silent; and I asked her next, if she had not very often heard her brother and his wife say, how sorry they were that they had any body to drink in their house *that* terrible night. "No, Sir," she answered, "I never did."—"Well then," I said, "little girl, I am sorry for them, if they are not sorry for themselves. For, one day or other, I fear, sooner or later, God will punish them for it; and then they will be sorry, when it is too late. Will you tell them what I say?" "Yes, Sir," she replied.

After this I went to Mrs. Martin's, and it gave me some pleasure to observe, that her cottage was quite

clean and tidy ; and I complimented her upon it, and said good-humouredly, that I should not now be surprised to find her husband some day at dinner with her. "Why, Sir," she answered, "my child is better, and I am better myself, as I dare say you perceive ; and so I can bestir myself a little to make things comfortable. But as to my husband, Sir, I do not know what to think of it. It is no encouragement to *us* poor wives, Sir, to toil and slave to keep every thing neat and pleasant, if they will not come near us." "*That* is true," I said ; "but I would do it, nevertheless, for many reasons ; and then, if he should happen to come in, he might find himself so comfortable, and so happy, as to be tempted to try the experiment again : so that, in the end, when he observes that he is always welcomed with a cheerful countenance, and can sit down on a clean chair, with a clean cloth also before him, and have his bacon and potatoes nicely fried, he will get into the habit of prizing the calm and cheap and innocent delights of wife, children and home, before the noisy, expensive, and too often guilty mirth of the tap-room. If he comes once, Mrs. Martin, be sure to press him to come again the next day, and then the following day, and so on day after day. Habit is the great thing ; and if you could bring him to *that*, it might be as difficult hereafter to separate him from his home, as it is now to tear him from the ale-house." "Ah ! Sir," she replied mournfully, "I wish I could bring it about ! But it is not so easy a matter. However, Sir, I think he has come home lately more than he used to do. At one time he never came at all ; and, just as was to be expected, my oldest boy followed his example, and fell into bad company ; and, poor fel-

low! we were obliged to send him to sea to escape something worse."

Here the tears came into her eyes with the bitterness of her recollections; and just at the same instant I gave her fresh cause for pain—for, having espied one of her children on the floor playing with a prayer-book, and on the very point of tearing out a leaf, I suddenly stooped down, and rescued it from the child's grasp, and put it into her hand. It was a prayer-book which the same unfortunate son had left behind him, intentionally, for the use of his mother, and as a memorial of himself—so she informed me when she saw it; and then her tears redoubled, and she exclaimed sobbing, "Ah! dear lad, when shall I see thee again?" "Comfort yourself, Mrs. Martin," I said; "for his making you this sort of present seems to shew, that he had some ideas and feelings of religion—what wonder, therefore, if God's grace should reform him one day or other, and he should be a blessing to you at the last?" "Yes, Sir," she answered, brightening up a little; "he was beginning to see the folly of his ways; and, if ever the Lord sends him back to me, I hope he will be a new man." "If you will use this prayer-book," I said, "as it is intended to be used, you will yourself, perhaps, be instrumental to so blessed a work. Take it with you to church, and it will remind you, when you are in the holy place, of one so dear to you, and now far away, exposed to the stormy waves, and in need of your prayers. Will you not pray *then* with the greater earnestness and fervour? And will not a gracious God listen to, and bless such a prayer? He cannot resist a mother lifting up her suppliant hands in his own house, and in behalf of her prodigal

son and lost sheep, whom she implores him to bring him back into the fold of the Great Shepherd of souls! Will you do this, and save him!"

A chord was struck which vibrated to her heart; and the pungency of her feelings denied all utterance to her tongue. After a short pause I resumed in this manner—"You told me, Mrs. Martin, that in your former place of abode you did not neglect public worship; at least so I understood you. How was this?" "I went to chapel, Sir," she answered, thus confirming my former suspicions. "But why to chapel?" I said: "was there no church in your village?" "Yes, yes, Sir," she replied; "there was a church to be sure; but the minister of the chapel came to me, which the rector did not, and persuaded me to go there." "Did you expect the rector then," I asked, "to go to everybody and persuade them to come to church?" She hesitated a little; so I continued—"That would not be an easy thing, or perhaps a possible thing, in a large parish, Mrs. Martin. Besides, did not you see the church daily, and know the sacred use of it, and hear the bells chiming from the tower to remind you of it, and to proclaim the hour when your rector would be there to meet you? Is any one so ignorant as not to be aware, that there is in every place a person appointed by the laws of our country, to pray for the people, and with them; to read the Holy Scriptures to them; and to preach to them from the pulpit? You all, I believe, know these things well enough; but you must be flattered, forsooth, and made much of, or you will have nothing to do with your proper minister. No doubt, he has a due regard for the salvation of your souls; but he cannot go to every individual, and he will never

stoop to humour your wrong caprices and passions for the sake of gaining more followers, or dare to preach a gospel to you which is not the gospel. How readily are you led astray by those who go about making proselytes, and will take the trouble to court you ! And the next step is, when you have left your church, to hate and abuse it, as well as its ministers."

"No, indeed, Sir," replied Mrs. Martin, "*that* is not the case with *me* at least, nor with *our* minister;" and then she told me a little story in proof of her assertion, which I will record by way of doing justice to that gentleman. "He asked me, Sir, one day," she said, "if I could not prevail upon my husband to come to chapel with me; and so I took an opportunity of mentioning it to my husband; and his answer was, that if I liked it he would go to church, but not to chapel, with me. And when I reported this to our minister, Sir, 'Go to church, then,' he said, 'good woman, in God's name, if that may be the means of drawing your husband to a place of worship. Salvation may be had at church as well as at chapel, with the blessing of the Lord.'" "Yes, Mrs. Martin," I rejoined; "*that* is the great point, to have God's blessing upon the means which you use for your salvation; and, if he will, he may bless any means, even the most unlikely. But observe; when he has ordained means of a certain kind, and ministers also for the practice and furtherance of those means, have we any right to expect his blessing upon other means which *we* choose for ourselves? Is it not very perverse and very preposterous in *us*, who wish to be saved, to neglect the means which God himself has appointed? And in doing so, and choosing others for ourselves, do we not act as if we

did not believe God, or as if we knew better than he did? Consider then, whether you think that God is likely to be pleased with such conduct, and to bless it; or, on the contrary, whether he is not more likely to desert you altogether, and to give you up to be deluded and deceived by any false pretenders to the knowledge of his ways?"

I stopped here, that she might answer me, if she wished it—and she did; but it was only to tell me, that she never understood any thing of this sort before—an answer which I heard perpetually, and which convinced me, that a great deal of dissent springs from mere ignorance. And, indeed, there is no doubt but that, if the clergy had plenty of church-room, and time to go amongst their people, and converse with them, dissent would be vastly diminished. With this lamentable defect of churches, which is made a still greater evil by the assignment of pews, I always found myself, in my own particular case, at a great loss what to do with the mass of my parishioners, on talking with them on the subject of religious worship. I might be disposed to tell them the truth in strong terms, in obedience to my ordination-vow; but to enjoin them all to come to church would have been ridiculous; for both they and I knew it to be impossible. However, as long as we see our churches not filled at all the services, it is undoubtedly our bounden duty to labour for that end, and I trust we all do so. But here again the assignment of the pews stands in our way, and is a great obstacle to our exertions. We observe, perhaps, that a family having a pew are generally absent at one of the services; and we take advantage of the opportunity to seat some other family desirous of

coming to church, but excluded for want of sittings of their own. But suddenly and unexpectedly the family belonging to the pew make their appearance, and without any ceremonious scruple turn the intruders out, who never expose themselves to the same mortification again.

In reply to Mrs. Martin, I said, "Well then, now that I have endeavoured to explain this matter to you, I hope you will reflect seriously upon it. At the same time I must tell you, that I am much pleased with the chapel-minister. He is the more to be praised, because I fear there are few of his description. In general, they first usurp our station, and then revile, and oppose, and attack us with the bitterest hostility. Let me ask you, Mrs. Martin; did you never hear any other minister (as he called *himself*, after having appointed *himself*) holding a very different language in the pulpit of your chapel; and crying out against the corruptions of the church, and asserting boldly, and maliciously, that there is no salvation to be had in it; and wishing and foretelling the downfall of it; and thus, by every means, stirring up your passions against it?" "I cannot deny but that I have, Sir," she answered; "but I never heard our own minister speak in that manner; and he uses the prayer-book too."—"Well, Mrs. Martin," I said, "and it would be better for him, perhaps, not only to use the prayer-book, but also the church itself for which the prayer-book was made. For yourself, I am quite sure that nothing can be better than to stick fast to the church. Whilst you are there, you will be safe; and you will know what you are about; and you will always hear the same doctrines. If you wander from it, it is most

likely that you will go astray; and that you will never know where you are; and that the doctrines will vary according to the knowledge and temper of the preacher."

Mrs. Martin not appearing disposed to controvert these positions, I now enquired of her, whether, upon recollection, she could give me a more favourable account than she had done before of poor Mrs. Brockbourn's latter end. "I do not know, Sir," she replied, "whether I can. I told you, Sir, of her desire to pray, and to be taught how to do it properly. There was another thing which I have not yet mentioned to you. 'Mrs. Martin,' she said, 'I have only one enemy in this place that I know of; but, if I have ever so many, I forgive them all.' At first, Sir, I thought that she meant *me*; for she had been in a great rage with me in the morning, and had sworn at me with violence; and I fully expected that she would have struck me." "How happened this?" I asked. "Why, Sir," she answered, "I took her to task as I had done before, about the disgrace which she brought upon herself by her drunkenness; and I reproached her for being tipsy so early too, and making herself a laughing-stock to all the half-grown youths who were following her, and teasing her; my own son, Sir, was one of them. So for these reasons I supposed that she bore ill-will towards me, and looked upon me as her enemy. But it did not seem so afterwards, Sir: for, when I was cutting off her poor hair, which was clotted with blood, Sir, and sticking close to her head, so that it was difficult to examine her wounds, she was very uneasy, and I was afraid that I hurt her in doing it; and I said, 'Do I hurt you, Mrs. Brockbourn?



If I give you pain, I will be more careful over the rest.' 'No, no, Mrs. Martin,' she answered me, 'you give me no pain; you do not hurt me at all; you are too good to me; I do not deserve such a kindness at your hands.' I think therefore, Sir, that it was not *me*, whom she considered to be her enemy, and forgave."

"Most probably not," I said. "Was it her husband, do you imagine?" "Oh! no, Sir," she replied, "it was not *him*. She never spoke of him in that manner, during the whole night, at least, when she was in her senses. He had generally been a kind and affectionate husband to her, and now and then a great deal too indulgent. She suspected somebody, I think, of having set him on to beat her with more violence than usual, and contrary to his former habit of correcting her; but who it could be I cannot tell."—"Well, it is no matter," I said; "the comfort is, amongst so many horrors, that she felt no ill will towards any body in the midst of her sufferings, and with the prospect of a speedy death before her; not even towards *him*, who was the immediate cause of all. Forgiveness was upon her tongue; may she have heard it already from the tongue of another! We have a Saviour for a judge, Mrs. Martin; and the doctrine inspires hope at once. She suffered greatly here; perhaps it was to avert eternal sufferings hereafter."

These reflections affected Mrs. Martin, as her pathetic story of cutting the hair congealed with blood had affected *me*, deeply, and to the heart. With her hands lifted up, however, she forced out an *amen*, and said, "So be it." Her conduct and feelings raised her in my estimation; and when I perceived

that she was recovered a little, I asked her if she intended to continue in this wicked place. "My first thought, Sir, was to fly," she answered. "But I am in debt for my rent; and my children might not find so good a school elsewhere; and I hope too, Sir, that they will all take warning by this crime, and by what you have said upon it." "Yes," I rejoined; "but I have not seen those who stand most in need of being rebuked and admonished for their good." "If you mean the elder and younger Mr. Hodges, Sir," she said, "it is a pity indeed that you have not seen them; but they have heard of your being here, Sir, and of the good advice which you have given us; and the elder Mr. Hodges has sent two of his children to the schools, which, I dare say, you know very well." "And how does that poor crippled son of his go on?" I enquired. "I meet him sometimes on the roads with the rest, attending upon the dust-carts, and he always bows to me with civility."

This wretched person had excited my pity in a very high degree. As I was wandering through the fields with Mrs. Warton, soon after my first settlement in the parish, we met with him by accident, half-naked; and being then a little boy, and having ascertained who he was, we persuaded his mother to try the experiment, whether any thing could be taught him. She consented for a time, and I think he did learn something. For, when we took him in hand, he was scarcely like a human being; his understanding was as defective as his body was distorted; with his mouth he could utter nothing intelligible but curses; and his countenance betrayed no sense, but a sort of mischievous cunning. By being treated

kindly, which was a thing quite new to him, he became somewhat civilized, and like a wild animal caught in the forest and tamed ; he began to be able to speak too, and to answer common questions that were put to him ; but, I fear, his understanding was never opened to entertain any sense of religion. In this state, under some foolish pretence or other, he was taken away from us ; and so, without any further instruction, he grew up to manhood under the evil example of his parents ; still a cripple, still half-naked, still without the knowledge of a God ; and, alas ! to do him any essential good appeared beyond human power. I shuddered always, when he passed me ; and the uncomfortable reflection that I knew not how to help him, sunk to my heart.

Mrs. Martin's account of him only increased my uneasiness. In answer to my question she said, " He is always blaspheming, Sir ; his blasphemies are horrible ; he seems to know only how to curse ; and I am sorry to tell you, Sir, that he copies it from his father. I asked Mr. Hodges, one day, Sir, if he did not grieve for these bad effects of his own swearing so much as he does, and he said that he did : but that, as for himself, he always rubbed off his oaths, as fast as he swore them, by asking God to forgive him." " I am afraid," I replied, " that God will not be satisfied so easily. Yet there is just a hope that the immediate feeling of the wickedness, and the immediate application to God for pardon, may in time produce a change in the bad habit. God, you know, will bless every endeavour with further help." " I wish it may be so, Sir," she said ; and upon this I left her.

Not many days afterwards, on the morning of the

following Sunday, as I was on my way to preach at one of my hamlets, being on foot, (for I kept neither carriage nor horse,) upon turning a corner, I came suddenly into contact with a drunken woman, and she reeled so much from side to side, that I had great difficulty in passing her. Her face was pale like death; her eyes seemed as if they would start from her head; her lips looked parched; and her clothes betrayed that she had been floundering in the mud. The spot in which I met her discovered to me from whence she came, and also whither she was going. It was too evident that she belonged to the neighbourhood of the Brockbourns, and indeed I knew her countenance, although I was unacquainted with her name. She had been to the large village, or town, which I have mentioned so often, to purchase, I suppose, the Sunday-fare for her family; for they kept open shops there for certain goods on Sundays as on other days, and in fact did more business. Nor is there any remedy for this violation of the Sabbath under the present circumstances. Whilst wages are paid on the Sunday, the shops must needs be open. In my own neighbourhood they were paid on the Saturday, and the marketing was accomplished the same night; not however without a considerable resistance on the part of the petty tradespeople, who were jealous of each other, and unwilling to sacrifice a single penny or even the chance of one for the sake of their religion and decency.—However, there she had been, and she had probably spent in gin the money which was destined for some useful purpose; and so was returning with her head heavy and her hands empty, to encounter a provoked husband.

To speak to this wretched woman now was not

convenient, and if convenient to me, would have been like speaking to the deaf but raging winds or waves ; so I walked steadily onward, pretending almost not to observe her ; and as there was a gentle rain falling, I covered myself with my umbrella from the gaze of divers people, a little farther off, who were looking from their windows, and were curious perhaps to know how I should treat so flagrant an infringement of the divine laws. At the same instant, within sight, there was trudging along towards me a little man, with a large package on his back, like a pedlar with his goods for sale, but whom I recognised at once, although at a distance, to be a birdcatcher, an old acquaintance of mine, who knew *me* as soon as *I* knew *him*, and passed me on the other side of the road, with his eyes fixed on the ground, and without bowing, as if he had not seen me. He seemed bound for the same place with the woman, where indeed he had once lived for many years ; and, having been unable to support his numerous family by his two trades of brickmaking and birdcatching, he had drawn what he could from the poor-rate, and from *me*. His wife, though young, and strong, and healthy, was the most constant and importunate beggar that we ever had known amongst us ; and she either always had, or pretended to have, a child or two sick with small-pox or measles, to justify her applications, and to excite compassion. But they had lately been to seek their fortunes elsewhere ; and, if they were now returned to their old abode, I was quite sure that I should know it shortly ; for brickmaking was on the sudden at a stand, and birdcatching was always precarious.

On the morrow I enquired, at the school, of the

children who came from that quarter, whether they had seen any drunken woman amongst them the day before ; and the answer was, that they had, and that it was Mrs. Costar : upon which I endeavoured to explain to them all the heinousness of her offence against God, and her foolish neglect, or wicked contempt of his warnings. It was evident that, to the greater part of them, a woman being drunk, even on a Sunday, was no wonder at all ; but they appeared to be impressed with my way of stating the thing, for the moment at least, although there was too good reason to fear, that the sight, which was so familiar to them at their own homes, would overpower, and perhaps wholly obliterate, all the advice and instruction which they might receive at school.

This matter being ended, the school-mistress announced to me some fresh scholars ; three of whom were the daughters of my friend, the birdcatcher, John Harwich by name ; and when I asked them where they lived, behold, it was in the cluster itself, and in the identical cottage of Jacob Brockbourn ; a fit dwelling for a man and woman, so utterly devoid, as they were reported to be, both John and his wife, of all sense of religion, or morality ; and to whom intoxication, as it was said, was the supreme and only happiness. When I saw these poor children, I was still more certain that I should have a visit from their father, or mother, or both ; for the sending the children to school was too often the mere prelude to a petition for pecuniary relief.

So it happened. The week had not elapsed, before I was honoured with a call from John himself late in the evening, and I gave him an audience in my hall. " Well, Harwich," I said, " so you are come

back to the old spot! You could not be happy anywhere else! Why, man, they have made themselves more famous *there*, whilst you were away, than when you were with them! But you are determined, I hear, to be the most noted of all; so you have got the very house in which the man killed his wife!"

Thus I assailed him, and thus he parried my attack; at the same time, with one of his hands stroking down his black hair over his forehead, and grinning a sort of smile. "Why, to be sure, Sir, I wanted a hole to put my head in, and I heard of *this*. It is not far from the brick-fields, if I could get work there; and sometimes there are some birds to be had, goldfinches, or what not, in the open fields around. Another would have taken it, and why not *me*? I fear no ghosts or goblins, nor my wife *nother*. The house is a house, Sir, after all, if forty women had been murdered in it; and I do not see how the house is in fault. I shall not murder *my* wife in it, depend upon me, Sir! She is safe for *me*, I warrant her. No, no, Sir, we never quarrel; we are very loving together; and as for drinking, it is seldom we can get *bread* enough to eat."

"Very well, Harwich," I said, "although it is not what many people would like for themselves, it *may* be no bad thing for *you* to live in this house; for, whatever you may say yourself about drinking, I know too certainly, that both *you* and your wife are so fond of it, as to let your poor children often go without bread rather than not indulge in it. But if ever you do this again, whilst you live there, besides the wickedness of the thing, you will be the most foolish man alive, and God will assuredly punish you in a tenfold degree." "How so, Sir?" he asked

eagerly. "Why," I said, "if any thing upon earth should warn a man to avoid drunkenness, the history of this house should do it; and the people especially who live in the house, one should think, could never forget the history of it. You tell me, that you and your wife are a very loving couple; did not Jacob Brockbourn also love his wife?" "So they say, Sir," he answered. "Well, then," I said, "it seems that a loving husband may kill his wife nevertheless. Was he not a sober man too?" "Why, they say *that* of him likewise," he replied; "but he must have been drunk then, to be sure, Sir." "So he got drunk once in his life," I said; "and in that state slew the woman whom he loved. Why should *he* do this, and not *you*, Harwich? Do *you* fear God, and obey him, and serve him, publicly and privately, more than Brockbourn did, so as to expect that he will keep you guiltless of such an enormous sin? Alas! alas! it shocks me to say it; but it is too true—you are more like ruffians, all of you, than men; and, if God did not check you, you would let your vices and your passions get the complete mastery over you continually, and so push you on to every crime. But, believe me, he will not always strive with you; nor, I should think, will he strive with you much longer. Look at Mrs. Costar. Could he have warned her more than he has done by the death of Mrs. Brockbourn? And yet you yourself saw her with your own eyes, on God's holy day, in a beastly state of drunkenness, on the high road. You saw her, and *you* were doing a wicked act yourself; travelling on the same road with your pack on your back, as if it had been a common day, and not *that* which God commanded you to keep holy! You were ashamed, indeed, when you



met *me*; because, I suppose, being one of God's ministers, I brought God himself to your thoughts. But what will God do? Do you think that God will give commands, and suffer you to break them at your will without punishing you? Repent, Harwich, I warn, and beseech you too; repent, and change your way of life; or I may soon see *you*, like Brockbourn, by the just judgments of God, thrown into a jail, and in danger of a gibbet, if not struck to the earth at once, and cut off for ever. Remember what I say; it is of infinite moment to you; if you do not repent, you will certainly perish everlastingly." Harwich was in no state to answer me; he did not even dare once to look me in the face; he fumbled with his hat, and scraped his feet on the floor, and seemed not to know whether he was standing on his head or his heels; so I said, "I will detain you no longer now; if I see your children regular at school, and hear also that you keep yourself sober, I will assist you in your distresses. Good night!" Thus I dismissed him.

Soon after this I bent my steps again in the same direction, with the especial object of speaking to Mrs. Costar. On my way I met the cripple, Hodges, by himself, with a donkey and a cart, collecting ashes. I believe that the ideas of this poor creature did not extend, or scarcely, beyond this operation. He descended into the areas with his empty basket; filled it, and mounted the steps again with the loaded basket on his back, and discharged it into the cart. When the cart would hold no more, he returned home to sift and sort his ashes. This was the point to which he had arrived in the scale of human beings; yet this man's soul might be as dear to God, and as

worthy of being saved, as any monarch's. However, it was in my charge ; and woe be to me, if I neglected it, when I had any favourable opportunity of helping it forward in the right way which leads to eternal life.

When I came close to him, he bowed to me, as he usually did, and I asked him what he was doing by himself. His answer was, that his father had sent him out with the donkey and cart to see if he could get a bit of bread. "How old are you?" I said. "Why, my mother told me, Sir," he replied, "that I was four-and-twenty." "Then you ought to know better," I said, "than to be always cursing and swearing, as I hear of you." "I never curse and swear, Sir, I am sure," he answered without hesitation and with a decisive tone ; thus accumulating crime upon crime ; for that he had told me a lie there could be no doubt whatever. "I am afraid you do not speak truth," I said. "Do you know what it is to curse and swear?" He might know, but it surpassed his power to explain ; so he stood looking at me with a vacant stare ; and as several persons were advancing towards us, it was impossible for me to question him any further. This short dialogue, therefore, I concluded thus in haste, before those persons were actually in contact with us. "There is a God up there," I said, pointing to the sky ; "he has more strength than the strongest man, aye, than a hundred of the strongest men whom you ever saw. Take care how you make him angry with you ! He can strike you dead in a moment, as he did your unhappy mother, or suffer another to kill you, as Jacob Brockbourn did his wife ; and he will certainly punish you in some way or other, if you make a wicked use

of his name. He has commanded you not to do it. And remember besides, that if you would have God to love you, and bless you, and give you bread, you must pray to him very often, and you must never, on any account, tell a lie. He hates all liars and swearers, and will send them to the bad place. You know where I mean?"

Upon this I passed on, but in less than two hundred yards I met with another little adventure. There was old Goody South on the road, with her ample red face blazing from a distance. It was evident that she did not wish to encounter me to-day, or in this place; and probably she hoped to escape by the lucky intervention of a shower and an accidental crowd of passengers. Nevertheless, when she was opposite to me, she dropped a hasty curtsy, though without looking at me; and, at first, I had intended to let her go quietly away; but suddenly finding the coast clear, I turned round, and called after her, and said, "Where were *you*, Goody, when I knocked at your door lately?" "I was within, Sir," she replied, "and heard you; but I did not know who it was. Ah! Sir, there are so many wicked people about there, that, when my old man is not at home, I always fasten my door for fear." "Are you sure," I said, looking inquisitively at her, "that you were not lying drunk upon your bed?" "O that vile woman!" she cried out in anger, and with vehemence. "If she did not try to stick me twice, when her own husband was by, I am not to be believed!" "Indeed, I am afraid that you are not, Mrs. South," I said. "However, I am told that you would have stuck *her*, if a gracious God had not caused you to stumble upon the threshold. Where would you have been now, if

it had not been for that providential stumble? With Brockbourn, no doubt; and, perhaps, you would have been hanged together. Did not I warn you? I hope, when you came to your senses, you fell upon your knees, and blessed God for preventing you from shedding the life's blood of a fellow-creature. Ah! Mrs. South, God forgive you, and change your heart! Where do you expect to go to, when you die?" "To heaven, Sir, I hope," she replied in an instant, but abashed and alarmed. "To heaven!" I said, with a tone of surprise and severity; "*you* hope to go to heaven?" And then lowering my voice, because there were people approaching us, I added, "What! a drunkard, and a would-be murderer go to heaven? Impossible."

I left her to digest this, and hastened along on my journey. And I could not help wondering at first, that Mrs. Forbes, who had particularly requested me not to mention the circumstance of her having told me what Mrs. South had done, should have mentioned it herself. But upon more consideration, such is the malignity of these people towards one another, as I too well knew, I had no doubt that she had taunted and irritated the poor old woman with this very information, that she had made "the Doctor" acquainted with her enormities.

Mrs. Costar's cottage was one of the four already described, and at the back of Mrs. South's. She was not aware of my having met her on the unfortunate Sunday, or thought at least that I was ignorant who she was. For, whilst I was talking to her neighbour who was back to back with Mrs. Forbes, and whose name was Worsley, she came out of her own cottage;

and joined in conversation with us. At first the subject was Mrs. Worsley's sick children, and next the drunkenness of Mrs. South, and her neglect of the warning which God had just given them all. "For my part," said Mrs. Worsley, "I cannot pretend to deny, that I have often seen Mrs. South in liquor." "Why," I replied, "it is scarcely possible for her to get to her own house without passing your's; so that you cannot fail of having a pretty accurate knowledge of her proceedings. Besides, I believe, she makes herself known through the whole quarter." "She does indeed, Sir," said Mrs. Worsley; but Mrs. Costar was silent; and I observed that she was very pale, which confirmed my conjecture, that gin or brandy was her favourite beverage. "Ah! Mrs. Worsley," I rejoined, "it is a great pity that she should have brought herself in a long life to such a disgraceful and sinful habit; and now, in her old age, when she has one foot in the grave, she cannot break through it. She will go, I fear, like Mrs. Brockbourn, to meet her judge, with the fumes of liquor steaming about her, bereft of her reason and her senses. This terrible thought might reclaim her, if anything could; for, as for character in this world, she has long ago lost all care about it, and all respect for the opinion of others. This, I trust, is not the case with *you*, or Mrs. Costar. In your appearance you are both respectable young women, and your wish would be, I should have hoped, to be respected, and to bear a good character. And yet," I said, looking significantly and fixedly at Mrs. Costar, "with all this, and with such an odious and ugly example constantly before your eyes, to my

great wonder and astonishment, you seem sometimes as if you were bent on the same disgrace and destruction. What a strange infatuation is this!"

Mrs. Costar applied this expostulation to herself, as she could scarcely avoid doing; but still, trusting to my ignorance of her habits, she began immediately to deny the justice of it. "Surely, Sir," she said, "you cannot mean *me*, when you speak in that manner. Ask Mrs. Worsley here, and she will tell you, Sir—I am certain, she will not say that she ever saw me tipsy since we have been next-door neighbours. Mrs. Worsley, do tell the gentleman what you know about it, and set my character fair before him." "Very well," I said, turning from *her* to the other; "speak, Mrs. Worsley, by all means; but," I added, with a stern and imposing countenance, "be careful that you speak the truth, and nothing but the truth. God above is a God of truth, and he will hear you."

Thus admonished, Mrs. Worsley was speechless; so I resumed in this manner. "You are wise, Mrs. Worsley, not to burden your conscience with a lie. But what shall I say to *you*, Mrs. Costar, who are not satisfied with one crime, great enough and disgusting enough in itself, but you must add another to it as great perhaps in the sight of God, and very disgusting to all honest minds; and you would also persuade your neighbour, if you could, to abet you in your falsehood, and for your sake to make God her enemy. But see the affliction into which it has pleased God to bring her, by sending sickness upon her children; and then think, whether, to please *you*, she ought to venture to provoke him to press more heavily upon her; or, rather, whether she ought not to use every

endeavour to correct all that is amiss in her own conduct, so as to be able to ask a blessing of him with a mind more calm and undisturbed. Woe betide those who go to him with a lie in their mouths!"

At this instant the crying of one of her children compelled Mrs. Worsley to go into her cottage suddenly; but I could easily perceive, that she went away with a feeling of self-gratulation, whilst her neighbour stood condemned, and touched to the quick. However, when she was left standing alone with me, and there was no longer any one to disprove whatever she might say, either by silence or by speech, she recovered her confidence to a certain degree, and assured me without blushing, that they were gross slanderers who had represented her to me as a woman given to drunkenness; and having made this bold assertion, she beat a retreat, and re-entered her own castle to secure herself, as I suppose she hoped, from any further attack. I was glad of this, because I wished to talk to her without exposing her too much to her neighbours; so I pursued her immediately, and arrived at her door before she had passed through the outer into the inner room, where, it seemed, she and her husband usually lodged. The outer room indeed was full of potatoes, piled on both sides, with a narrow lane between for passengers to go through, in which I now arrested Mrs. Costar's steps, by calling after her, and saying, "Stay, stay, Mrs. Costar, we will clear up this matter, if you please."

Upon this she turned round towards me, and I asked her, whether she intended positively to affirm that she had never been intoxicated; and I put the question to her in such a tone as subdued her to a

sort of half-confession, that once or twice in her life, perhaps, she might have had a little drop too much. "And what happened to you last Sunday, Mrs. Costar?" I said. "Last Sunday, Sir?" she enquired with surprise. "Yes," I said, "last Sunday. You can remember, I suppose, what happened so short a time ago." She pretended to consider; so I asked her, whether she had not been to the village for some purpose or other; and she allowed that possibly she might. "You were certainly there, Mrs. Costar," I said, "and as certainly with no intention of going to church; for, I believe, you were on your way back again about half an hour before church began. But in what a state, Mrs. Costar. Unable to walk, or stand! Drunk before eleven in the morning! A woman, forsooth! On God's holy day too! O what a scandal was it to all the pious, and the good; what a laughing-stock did you make yourself for the foolish and the wicked; what a heavy burden have you taken upon you for your own conscience to bear! I tremble for you, Mrs. Costar; if your soul had been required of you then, like Mrs. Brockbourn's in the same circumstances, where would it have been now? It is terrible even to think about it. But where *will* it be, whenever it is called away, unless it be first cleansed from this foul stain by rivers of tears, flowing from the very heart, and presented before God, as a memorial of your deep sorrow and anguish, by your blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?"

Mrs. Costar was evidently disturbed with the awfulness of these sentiments, and with the severity of my manner in pronouncing them; but still, seeing, as she thought, a chance of escape from this bitter



charge against her, she tried it, and said, with a humbled tone and look however, "There must surely be some mistake about this matter, Sir; the person who has told you this, Sir, might have taken some other woman for *me*; or, very likely, bears me a grudge, and so has invented the whole story to ruin me." "I myself am the person, Mrs. Costar!" I exclaimed with a terrific voice. "I saw you with my own eyes! Why will you go on, as you do, with as much foolishness as wickedness, to add sin to sin, and to sink yourself down into a deeper perdition? I saw you myself; John Harwich was behind you; a dozen children, at the least, belonging to the schools, after returning from church, beheld the filthy plight in which you were during the day, and have blazoned it abroad to your lasting disgrace. Fie upon you! fie upon you! And, as it seems to *me*, you have not repented for a moment."

Mrs. Costar now trembled exceedingly, and attempted no further defence, or excuse. For a short time she stood, but with her face averted, speechless, and in dismay. What to say, or what to do, she manifestly knew not. The noble resolve of confession and prayer to God for pardon did not appear to suggest itself once to her thoughts. At length with a quick step she hurried into her inner room. I pursued with equal speed; for I felt a sort of fervour about me, which did not permit me to rest, till I had unburthened myself somewhat more, and overwhelmed her, if possible, with the sentiments which pressed for utterance. She was frightened; but her heart, I think, was not affected. It was a rock, which God alone could effectually touch.

I arrived at the inner door. She was standing at the farthest corner of the apartment, with her face towards me; for she must have heard me following her, and was anxious, no doubt, as to the scene which still remained to be acted. "Ah! Mrs. Costar," I said mournfully, "you have been very wicked, and you are not penitent! In this condition you cannot be saved! your soul is lost for ever! But see *me*; here I am, your proper minister, whose bounden duty, and whose earnest wish it is, to rescue you from that deplorable condition, and to teach you how to reconcile yourself to an offended God, who will burn up the unrepentant sinners with unquenchable fire; whilst it is in your power, apply to *me* for help. Do I speak as I do, except for *your* good?"

She was softened a little, and she replied to my last words, that she knew I intended her well. To increase the impression which appeared to be made upon her, I endeavoured to aggravate her sin in this manner. "I intend you well, certainly, Mrs. Costar," I said; "but before I can do you any real good, you must be brought to understand, more fully than you seem to do at present, the greatness of your offences against God. The Sabbath-day was set apart from the rest of the days to be kept holy unto the Lord. On that day, therefore, our chief concern should be to think of God, and of *him* alone; and more especially to go to his own house to pray to him, and worship him there. I was on my way to do this, and my thoughts were full of the sacred service which I was about to perform; and I might reasonably have expected to have seen *you*, Mrs. Costar, behind or before me, in your Sunday-

clothes, hastening forward with looks of zeal and devotion, to the same holy place, and for the same pious purpose, of which the bells were then reminding us, and calling us to join the crowd of worshippers. Ah! what a shock then must it have been to my best feelings to have met *you*, as I did, in your week-day dress, and that too bespattered with mire; yourself unable to walk along with decency, or, indeed, without the constant danger of a fall, staggering, in short, across the road, to the right hand, and then to the left, and then back again to the right; the people jeering you from their windows, as you passed them, or crying out shame upon you! shame upon you! But how shall I describe your face, Mrs. Costar? God gave us mind and understanding, and he placed the signs of them in our countenance; but *your's* was that of an idiot: the noble image in which *he* made you was gone; there was neither reason, nor ~~sense~~ left; you had degraded yourself down to a brute, or even below. You, probably, knew nobody; you were, I suppose, entirely ignorant where you were, and what you were doing. To speak to you was useless, or might have been worse. If you had yourself the power of speech, and had been urged to speak, you would have employed that power, most probably, in wounding my ears with low vulgarities, or with horrid oaths and imprecations; you would, most probably, have cursed both yourself and *me*; instead of listening to the minister of your God and Saviour, you would, most probably, have blasphemed *them* themselves. I passed you therefore in silence; I shuddered with the fear of provoking you to add crime to crime, and so to pull down a heavier vengeance on your head; but every step I took, your guilt haunted

my imagination more and more, and shewed itself in more hideous colours. What! I said to myself, does this miserable woman so utterly despise God's denunciations of everlasting woe to drunkards, as to think that she cannot sufficiently prove her contempt for them by merely transgressing the divine command, but she must do it on the very day which God has hallowed for himself? Is she not content, as others are, to cover her crime with darkness from the eyes of men at least; (for the darkness is no darkness to God; to *him* darkness and light are both the same) but must she come forth, bold and shameless before the light of God's sun, and challenge the public gaze? To intoxicate herself on a week-day is, it seems, to *her* too simple and poor a wickedness; too like the common wickedness of frail and sinful men; she does it on the Sabbath; aye, on the Sabbath-morn, lest any particle of the holy day might admit of a holy thought. Whilst the very bells are chiming for church, and the people with their minister on the way, she braves them all; *that* is the moment which she chooses for shewing herself abroad, undaunted and unaffected by the hallowed sounds, or by any consideration of the holy work which is about to begin. But God forbid that I should not pray for her soul, which she seems so eagerly bent to destroy! She herself, perchance, knows not how to pray, even in a sober moment. But, if she does, will God, in his justice, permit her ever again to see such a moment? One such moment, with an inclination to spend it in prayer, might be worth a world to her. May he in his mercy grant her many! But that righteous Being might say, 'I have warned her, and she has taken no heed; it is but now that I struck her neighbour by her own husband's

hand; and this thoughtless woman lays it not to heart. Nay, so much does she scorn my warnings, that she surpasses her neighbour in the very crime which produced her neighbour's terrible death. She commits the same crime on my holy day of rest and prayer! Shall I not punish with a tenfold wrath? Who will plead for her, or pretend to extenuate an offence like this?"

Here I stopped; for at this moment Mrs. Costar, being quite overpowered by so solemn and terrific an application of God's dealings to her own case, sunk down upon a chair. I had observed, and I was glad to observe it, that for some time she had supported herself with difficulty. From the beginning her eyes had been fixed on the ground; and by degrees her face had been quite averted from mine. Then a trembling seemed to seize her, and her knees, I thought, knocked against each other; and had there not been a chair behind her, she must have fallen to the floor. I now came close to her in her distress, and said immediately in a soothing tone, "I have only been telling you my own reflections, Mrs. Costar, as I went along after I had passed you on that unfortunate day. God has not dealt with you, as I feared he might do. He has been gracious to you, abundantly gracious. You have found some one to plead for you, whom God would not refuse; and so he has granted you time for sorrow, remorse, and repentance. Use it, Mrs. Costar, and entreat your blessed Saviour Jesus Christ to go on interceding for you, and to send his Holy Spirit to help you."

She was unable to make me any reply. She sat with her elbow resting upon a table, and she covered her face with her hand. Thus I left her; but, in

passing Mrs. Worsley's door, I mentioned Mrs. Costar's situation, and her probable want of assistance, which Mrs. Worsley promised at once to afford her. I gave her also some little books for their joint perusal, with which the side pocket of my great coat was generally furnished. This being done, I hastened to another quarter, hoping for more occasions of self-congratulation, and thankfulness to Providence, that a day had not been lost.

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### § 3. *The White Family, &c.*

Nor many days afterwards I was informed that there were several poor persons at my back-door, desirous of speaking with me ; which, indeed, was almost daily the case, but I mention this in particular, because when I came to them, the first face which I saw was that of old Mrs. South, and she began immediately to weep, and to complain that she was in great distress. " No wonder, Mrs. South," I said, " you spend in drink, as soon as you get it, what should be kept to buy bread and fuel in time of need." Upon this she appealed to a woman standing by her side, as Mrs. Costar had done to Mrs. Worsley, to testify for her that the reports of her drunkenness were all false. So I turned to this woman, and begged that she would not speak upon the matter at all ; " for, if you tell a lie," I said, " you will make God your enemy ; and if you tell the truth, the wicked old woman here will never cease to persecute you." Then turning again to Mrs. South, I said, " If your tears are counterfeit,

which I rather suspect, it is not fit that you should profit by them ; and, indeed, they will only lead me to have the worse opinion of you. But should they be real tears, and forced from you by want, you know where to go for relief ; you are close to your own parish, where you may be taken care of according to the merciful laws of your country. If you cry because I am angry with you, you know how to recover my favour, which will be for your good in every way. At present I shall do nothing for you. If I gave you money, the next pot-house would have it."

After this I despatched the rest of the cases waiting for me, and at the same time a woman drove up to the court-yard in a chaise-cart, and besought me to grant an order for her husband to be received into the hospital ; one of our surgeons having pronounced that a leg must be amputated without delay. It was a Saturday, and not the proper day for admission of in-patients ; but the urgency of the circumstances made it necessary to overlook forms ; and I must do the managers of the hospital the justice to say, that, if there was room, and the loss of time might be of consequence to the sick person, they were as ready to overlook forms as the subscribers themselves. The order, therefore, adapted to the case, was speedily put into the woman's hands ; she mounted her cart, whipped her horse, and was out of sight in a moment. Her whole manner indicated her opinion of the absolute necessity of haste.

The husband of this woman, whose name was White, was reported to be one of the most profligate in my parish. God knows whether this were true. All the low vices of intoxication, fornication, lying, and swearing were as familiar to him, so it was said,

as his every-day clothes; and that he pursued both *them*, and many others, with a high hand, and without any apparent care for God or devil. Not even the array of a court of justice, and the awful solemnity of an oath, could bind him, they told me, to speak the truth. For a friend arraigned there, (and he had many such,) it seemed as if he would affirm anything, however false and improbable; but his zeal always betrayed him, and he went away constantly branded with some deeper stigma upon his character. Yet he respected or feared *me*; and he never passed me without the acknowledgment of my office by a bow, although I had compelled him to pay me tithes; not perhaps what was my due, but enough to excite his hostility. However, I had done him one small favour. He wished to keep a slaughter-house, and when I had ascertained the sentiments of those most nearly concerned, I certified for him, to enable him to do it. Never was there a man, I should think, more fit for such a business. In Utopia he would have been above all value for butchery. His habitation, too; near to the famous cluster, had the same advantage of being out of the public notice, and also out of the way of persons likely to complain of the disagreeable stench which he was about to create. In the end, he added the boiling of bones to his other trade, by which both the quantity and the quality of the stench were grievously augmented.

I had long been desirous of opening an intercourse with this man; but I never saw him except in his chaise-cart, and I did not discover, that, with all the ruddiness of health in his countenance, he had a diseased leg, which for two or three years had occasioned him at times a great deal of pain. He had



consulted upon it one of the most eminent surgeons in the neighbouring town, and had been under his care and direction for many months; but the disorder, I believe, had baffled all his skill, or, more probably, the patient refused to cease from drinking, and other debaucheries, and so fed the disorder till it was beyond the reach of surgery or medicine. It was no wonder, therefore, that one of our own surgeons, to whom he applied only in the last resort, was unable to do anything for him, and now, apprehending a mortification, recommended that the whole leg should be taken off.

I was grieved with the thought of suffering a person of this description to slip out of my hands so suddenly and so unexpectedly, and with so little hope of ever seeing him again. No sooner, therefore, was Mrs. White gone, than I took the resolution to follow her instantly. If I lost no time, and walked quick, there was just a chance of my being able to arrive at the slaughter-house before the poor man set off for the hospital. The distance was about two miles. My curate accompanied me.

Upon arriving in the yard, we saw the cart standing there with a smoking horse harnessed to it, as if one journey were just finished, and another about to be undertaken; and we congratulated ourselves that we had come in the very crisis of time. So we hastened into the house, not only for the performance of the great duty which brought us thither, but glad to escape from the pestilential smell of the steaming boilers, and of the casks of bones and horse-flesh piled upon one another up to the skies. Mrs. White herself let us in; and, having first announced us from below to her husband, she conducted us immediately upstairs to him.

The acute anguish of the pain, under which he was suffering, shewed itself upon the first glimpse. The rack itself could not have tortured him more, as it seemed at least. He was sitting on his bed towards the bottom, with a part of his clothes on ; his arms were clasped round the diseased leg, the knee being lifted up, and his face resting upon it. All the bed-clothes had been thrown off, and were lying in confusion on the floor ; and he himself, after many tossings, no doubt, had brought himself round with his face towards the head of the bed. He raised it a little from his knee when I came close to him : his cheeks were flushed with red ; drops of sweat hung upon his chin ; his eyes were haggard with watching and restlessness ; the whole air of his countenance bespoke a pain thrilling through the bone and piercing to the very marrow within. In his agony, as I learnt afterwards, he had torn off the plasters which covered his wounds, but I did not see them, for some one had thrown a cloth over them as I approached the bed ; and when he was about to remove the cloth himself to shew them to me, I begged of him to spare me so mournful a sight. I saw, however, the upper part of the leg, which was mere bone covered with skin ; the flesh had wasted entirely away, and now, I believe, the bone itself was dissolving and separating by piecemeal. Whilst we were with him, he refrained from all outrageous or unmanly expressions of his sufferings. Our presence awed him. The ministers of that God whom he had set at nought were by his side, and came perhaps, he might think, to upbraid him for his crimes ; to taunt him with the punishment of them now inflicted upon him, and to threaten him with greater and more in-

tolerable woe hereafter. His look, when he dared to look towards us, was humble, and fearful, and oppressed. When he spoke, his voice was tremulous, and low, and a sort of stifled moan. But we came to comfort and console him; to rouse and awaken him indeed, if he were still alive only to the danger of his body, and dead to the worse danger of his soul: to urge him too, if necessary, by shaking over him the terrors of the Lord, to loathe and abominate sin, not because it was destroying his body, but rather because it might destroy both body and soul together in hell; yet we came to comfort and console him in the event, by teaching him to believe in the efficacy of repentance, through the merits of a crucified Redeemer.

I began to handle the spiritual wound with as much tenderness as possible, in the view of setting him quite at ease with respect to my intentions towards him. "I am very much grieved, Mr. White," I said, "to find you in so much pain, and also that I knew nothing of your melancholy situation till within this last hour. I am sure that I should have been with you the first moment in my power after hearing of your calamity, without waiting to be invited by you, for, indeed, I ought not to wait in any case; and with respect to yourself, good Sir, it has not escaped my notice, that, unlike some others, you have always treated me with the civilities which are due to my station. I wish indeed that you *had* invited me, and long ago; but you, perhaps, in your humility forbore to do it, not thinking yourself entitled, upon your sickness, to send for me on the sudden from so far to come to *you*, when, in your better days, you had unfortunately neglected coming to *me* where I might

always have been found at the appointed hours. You might have feared besides, that your manner of life would make me less disposed to visit you in your distress. But, on the very contrary, I am the more anxious about you upon these accounts : and it would have been cruel in me, if I had deserted you, when your need of my services must be so much the greater. The Divine Master, whose servant I am, came into this world to seek and to save that which was lost, and did not disdain, therefore, to consort with the most forlorn of mankind ; and I trust that, if it is not already well understood, it soon will be, from one end of my parish to the other,—that I, in this respect at least, endeavour to copy after that great and heavenly pattern. Whoever, or whatever they may be, who dwell within the limits of my spiritual charge, be they the lowest and the meanest in the scale of society, be they the most profligate in manners, and the most abandoned to every vice, they have souls equally precious, equally immortal to be saved ; and for that momentous purpose, if they will, they shall have my best instructions, my wisest counsels, and my most earnest prayers. And would to God that I might visit them before it were too late to be of use to them, and before it became a presumptuous thing to expect his blessing upon my attempts to reconcile him to them. In your case, good Sir, I lament certainly that I am shut up in such narrow limits ; yet I was determined to see you, if I could do no more. In the hospital I hope, not only that the operation which you are about to undergo may be successful, but also that you may meet with a clergyman, who will attend to your everlasting welfare. And I have reason to think that you will."

Through the whole of this little speech he seemed to go with me, as I could have wished. I did not know that severity was necessary, and therefore I used none: My sympathy soothed him; my expressions of anxiety for his salvation disposed him to listen to me; and my hints at his sinful life being so gentle and guarded created no alarm lest I might open his wounds and probe them to the bottom. He bowed his head repeatedly as I went along, sometimes in token of gratitude to *me*, sometimes in token of the consciousness of his own sins. All this was sufficiently marked; and he often spoke besides, but it was in the manner which I have described above, and, therefore, what he said was not very intelligible in itself; yet the changes of his countenance, and the inclinations of his head; attested satisfactorily, that he accorded with all my sentiments, and acquiesced in them. The sense of his own unworthiness appeared to *me*, above all, never to leave him.

When I paused, his wife interposed and said, "but he talks now, Sir, of not going to the hospital before the regular day of admission." "How so?" I exclaimed. "Has not the surgeon positively declared that there is danger of mortification, and that the leg must be taken off as soon as possible?" "Why, Sir, he is not so very positive about it," said the poor man himself, faltering, and whimpering; "he is not so positive as to order it to be done directly. A few days will make no difference, I dare say; and for the last half-hour I have been a good deal easier than I was." "The pain will vary, no doubt," I said; "but it is not the degree of the pain, I imagine, which makes it more or less necessary to perform the operation. Probably, if you had no pain at all, the

operation would be equally necessary, if it were not then too late. Do not therefore deceive yourself with the lessening of the pain, and throw away the precious moments by entertaining false hopes. It is most likely that the sooner the operation is performed, (other things being considered,) the greater will be the probability of your surviving it. When you get to the hospital, the surgeons will wait, without doubt, for several days, before they perform it, on account of the state of your body ; so that it would be a sad pity to add to this necessary delay by wilful delays of your own. Take my advice, good Sir, and set off immediately."

"But, Sir," said his wife, the man himself being silent, "he has just heard that a person is coming here this evening to make him an offer of a large quantity of bones, and he would be sorry to miss such an opportunity of turning a penny." "Ah!" I replied, "never mind the bones, good Sir ; you are in too critical a state to care about a few pence. What are all the bones, and all the money in the world worth in comparison with a man's life, by the lengthening of which he may have time to save his soul? Absolutely nothing ; for they are nothing to *him* who is dead, whether lost or not. But gain will not keep death away, or help a man to save his soul. Cast away the thought of it, therefore, I beseech you. It savours too much of this world below, whilst you ought to be thinking only of the world above, and how to get there. Ah ! I never expected to find you, in this extremity, troubling yourself about the paltry gains of a few pence, but full of the great concerns of your sins, your reconciliation with God, the safety of your soul, and the mighty gain of heaven, and on the

other hand the mighty loss, if you should lose it; which God forbid!"

This idea, enforced by my manner, seemed to be terrible to him; the awe of the other world overspread him, and subdued, I believe, even his present bodily pain, which almost surpassed human endurance, with the forebodings of worse to come hereafter; the tears stood in his eyes, and there was a convulsive twitching round his mouth, betokening great agitation of mind; he attempted to speak, but, as before, it was not his words, (for I did not understand them,) but his face and gestures, which let me into the innermost secrets of his breast. Words, indeed, might have been hypocritical, and have readily deceived me, the other symptoms could not; they spoke in a language which flowed from the heart, and to misinterpret them was impossible.

In a short time I resumed in this manner: "If the severity of the pain which you have suffered, and the knowledge of the fact, that your life can only be saved by an operation, dreadful in itself, and one which, even if successful, will cripple you for the remainder of your days, but which it may not please God to bless with success, so that you can only hope it; if such sufferings and fears have awakened you from your dreams of security, whilst you were, all along, sleeping on the edge of a precipice, happy is it, thrice happy for you! Then I would pronounce confidently that these afflictions are not simply judicial, and designed to cut you off by lingering torments without amending you, but fatherly corrections designed in mercy for your everlasting profit. You are aware, no doubt, that they are no random chances, but proceed from God's own hand; perhaps only in

the ordinary way of his dealings with men. He has appointed that certain disorders shall follow certain vices ; and, when this takes place, too many persons are apt to overlook God, and to go no further in their thoughts than the immediate cause. But in fact, we may be assured that it is as much his doing, as if we saw him stretch out his arm and do it. It would be idle in me if I were to pretend to be ignorant of *your* vices, Mr. White ; nor should I talk to you with propriety if I omitted to mention them. You know that amongst others you have been sadly addicted to drinking." " I was indeed, Sir," he replied, " but I have not been so much so of late." " Well," I said, " I am glad of it ; *that* shews a disposition to mend, and to take heed to God's warnings. You are convinced, I presume, that your disease is the consequence of your drinking ?" " I am, Sir," he answered. " What did people say," I asked, " in Mrs. Brockbourn's case ?" " That her death was a judgment upon her," he replied. " Yes," I said, " they could see it plainly enough, when God appeared to depart from his usual method in punishing us for our sins. If it had pleased him to spare Mrs. Brockbourn's life, she would, no doubt, have been afflicted with the common diseases which drinking produces, and that would have been equally God's work. Why he took the severer course with *her*, and cut her off at once, in a manner too so horrible to think of, by her own husband's hand, whilst he takes the milder course with the generality of sinners, and afflicts them only with such evils as he has originally appointed to be the natural consequence of their sins, we shall never be able to explain ; but it becomes us, when we see such an impressive example of his wrath, to



stand in awe of him ourselves, and to forsake our sins without delay. With *you*, good Sir, he has pursued the gentler method of leaving you to the natural consequences of your sins, and thus most graciously allows you, what he denied to your wretched neighbour, time and opportunity to appease him in the manner prescribed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This time and opportunity so mercifully indulged to you, you must seize upon most eagerly and most thankfully. Your having it is a convincing proof that God will not permit you to perish everlastingly, but by your own fault. Your pains, I trust, agonizing as they seem to be sometimes, will not prevent or lessen, but quicken and increase your grief and remorse for having offended him by breaking his laws. This is the effect which he would produce upon you ; and besides this, he would wean you from this world to which even now you appear, alas ! to be too much attached. He permits you to suffer pain almost beyond suffering ; nay, he sends it, perhaps, himself, to make you more sensible of the miseries of this evil world, to compel you, almost, to love it no longer, but to raise your thoughts to another and a better, and to apply to your Redeemer and Sanctifier to help you into it."

To all this he could answer nothing. He seemed entirely to acquiesce in the justice of every sentiment, and his appearance was that of a person truly woe-begone. My next employment, therefore, was to rehearse in his ear all the comfortable texts of Scripture which have been so often mentioned on similar occasions ; and when I had done this, I said solemnly, " Now, Mr. White, we will offer up to God a short prayer in your behalf ;" and, no sooner had I said it,

than my curate and myself were upon our knees by the bed-side, on the bare floor. I had no prayer-book with me of my own, and I feared to ask for one of his. If he *had* one, the moment, which appeared propitious, would have been lost in finding it; if he had none, which was most probable, it struck me, that it would be disadvantageous, under the present circumstances, to make such a discovery. So I prayed as follows:—

“O Lord God Almighty, but merciful as thou art mighty, look down from thy holy heavens above, and behold, with an eye of pity, this thy afflicted servant, here lying under thy hand, in great bodily pain and misery! Enable him to bear with patience whatever it may please thee to lay upon him, and to profit by thy fatherly visitation. Give him unfeigned repentance for all his sins, a stedfast faith in thy Son Jesus, and a sure trust and confidence in thy glorious promises. And if it should be thy gracious will, that he should recover his bodily health, O grant that he may pass the remnant of his days in thy fear, and to thy glory; but if not, let his pardon, we beseech thee, be sealed in heaven, before he goes hence, and is no more seen; and whenever thou requirest his soul of him, let it be presented before thee, cleansed from every stain of sin by the blood of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

This being pronounced, we rose immediately from our knees; and, when I had just pressed his hand, I led the way down stairs, and we departed at once. I was going that day to some distance, to bring home Mrs. Warton, who had been absent from me, with two of our children, for a short time, in order to try the effect of a change of air and scene. Thus I was

pressed on one side ; and, on the other, as it seemed expedient that the poor man should be taken to the hospital as soon as possible, I was anxious not to be the cause of any delay. My intercourse with him, therefore, was rather hurrying and tumultuary for an occasion so awful ; but, in reflecting, as we went along, upon the circumstances which had passed, we were decidedly of opinion, that a deep and salutary impression had been made ; and perhaps the more so for the suddenness, the unexpectedness, and the shortness of our visit. The scene was altogether a very striking one, and in the latter part of it I did not dare to observe him. How he bore my prayer, I cannot tell ; but when, in taking leave I touched his hand, there was, mixed with his woe, a sense of humility in his countenance which I had rarely witnessed in any former patient. It said as plainly as words could say it, but more emphatically, ‘ What am I that I should be treated with so much unmerited condescension !’ And I would have answered him, if I had possessed a correspondent power, ‘ Thy sins are forgiven thee ! Be whole of thy plague ! thy humility hath saved thee ! Go in peace, but sin no more !’

To finish this episode : On the following day, which was Sunday, I heard that he was not gone to the hospital ; so on Monday, immediately after an earlier breakfast than usual, I hastened away to the bone-house ; but I was a few minutes too late. There was probably a mixture of motives which had kept him at home till then ; the worldly one of lucre, the temporary pause of his pain, the horror of the operation, and the delusive but soothing hope of avoiding it without the sacrifice of his life. On Sunday night, however, driven almost to madness by a

fresh access of the same pain, every other motive gave way, and the single one of saving his life was predominant. When I arrived, therefore, he was gone.

In due time the leg was amputated, and appearances were as favourable as possible for a man advancing in years. The surgeon who performed the operation, as skilful as any of his compeers in a place which boasted that the whole world could not furnish their like, was kind enough to write to me to convey this agreeable information; but, alas! in two days afterwards the man was a corpse. "I was sitting by his side, Sir," said his wife with tears in her eyes; "we dreamt of nothing less than his death; he was as well as could be expected, and quite cheerful; we were talking of the various contrivances by which his loss was to be supplied, and his business carried on with the usual profit; when on the sudden, Sir, without a moment's warning, his countenance fell: I smelt the smell of death about him; spasms then seized him in his stomach, and in two hours he was dead."

Here was another tremendous warning to the same neighbourhood; and I know not how often, sometimes by myself, and sometimes with my curate, I pressed the people, and especially Mr. White's son, to listen to it, and to take heed to themselves. I will relate one conversation only which had something peculiar about it. The night had begun, and I heard a noise towards my churchyard, which alarmed my family. I went out, and saw a group of persons standing near a lamp at the entrance. They were talking loudly, and I could clearly perceive that some of them had guns. As I advanced, the men only

who had the guns remained; the rest dispersed various ways. "What are you about here?" I cried from a distance, and a voice answered me, "I am watching my father's grave." "*That* is very proper," I said, when I came close to them; "but it is better to be still and quiet, than to make all this hurly-burly; and I must insist upon it, that you do not fire off your guns to the disturbance and terror of all who live near the churchyard. Besides, you will never apprehend any plunderers of graves by such a proceeding. But perhaps you are cowards, and had rather frighten them away than encounter them." "No, indeed," replied one of them, not young White, "we had rather take them, if we could; for then, perhaps, we should have no need to come again, and the whole parish might have peace." "Well then," I said, "if you really wish to save yourselves trouble, and also to be of general use, you will make no noise. Do you think that any persons would be rash enough to attack the churchyard, if they heard such a clamour, and the report of fire-arms?" "Why, to be sure," they all replied together, "it is not very likely." "No," I said, "you must be as still as mice; but come, Mr. White; I wish to speak to *you* in private. It is a fine night; I will take a turn with you round the churchyard, if you please." "If *you* please, Sir," he answered; and so we set out at once.

The moon was shining very bright, and I could distinguish the countenance of my companion by this beautiful light almost as well as if it had been day. In truth, the countenance was a very silly countenance; and such was the configuration of it, that he would have seemed always to be laughing, if there had not been now and then a little quivering of the

lips which betokened a different feeling. "Your father then lies here," I said, to begin the conversation, "amongst these multitudes of the dead." "Yes, Sir," he answered; "more's the pity!" "Why?" I said; "was he not penitent before he died, and did not he pray earnestly to God to forgive his sins for Jesus Christ's sake, who was crucified for sinners?" "Yes, Sir," he replied; "but the business will go to *rack* and ruin." This prognostication was a very true one; for in a short time afterwards when I passed the spot, no smoke was curling upwards from the chimneys, and the stench of putrefaction had ceased. In short, the whole establishment was broken up, the widow was gone with all the valuable goods and chattels, and this youth himself, living hard by with his wife in a meaner cottage, was reduced to a wretched cart and a single lean horse, (one that had probably been brought there to be slaughtered,) with which he followed, a rival of old Hodges, the less gainful and less honourable trade of collecting ashes and bones. "Then you consider this world, it seems," I said, "as of more consequence, and more to be attended to, than the next; do you?" He hesitated; so I asked him his father's age; and he told me that it was fifty. "So then," I said, "in this world he had only fifty years to provide for; but the years of the next world cannot be counted for multitude. There will be millions of them after millions; nay, thousands of millions after thousands of millions; and when all these are passed, there will be as many more, and as many more again, and no end will ever come. What are fifty in comparison with these?" "Why, it is true, Sir," he answered, "they may go for almost nothing."

"Yet," I said, "they were of great importance to your father, few as they were; for, you know, it was only during those fifty that he could provide for the eternity into which he is now gone."

This was by no means clear to him; so I began again in this manner:—"You will agree with me, I suppose, in thinking, that it is of infinitely more consequence to every man, how he passes eternity, than how he passes the period of his natural life." As he still appeared to be perplexed, I asked him which was of most consequence to him, how he passed one single instant of time, or how he passed his whole life. "My whole life, to be sure, Sir," he answered readily. "And did you not understand very well," I said, "a little while ago, that a whole life, even of fifty years, was almost nothing, that is, like one single instant of time when compared with eternity?" "Yes, Sir," he replied. "Well then," I said, "you will now see plainly enough, that eternity is of more consequence to you than your whole life; and therefore that it is more reasonable for you to provide for eternity than to provide for your whole present life. Would you not think it very unreasonable, if any man were to provide for one single instant of his life, and neglect all the rest?" "I would indeed, Sir," he answered. "Then, if you consider the matter," I said, "you cannot fail of perceiving, that, to neglect eternity, and to look only to this life, must be infinitely more unreasonable." "Why, to be sure, Sir," he replied, "it is plain enough."

Having advanced thus far, I tried to advance another step in this way. "Now think then," I said, "We have agreed that eternity is of more consequence to us than the present life; and, therefore,

that it would be very unreasonable not to provide for eternity in preference to this life. But when is eternity to be provided for? That is the question for you. When you die, you will be in it, you know; so it will be then too late to provide for it. Must you not therefore provide for it before you die? In short, must you not provide for it during this present life?" "There is no other time, Sir," he answered, "that I know of." "There is none indeed," I said; "and now you come to understand, that during this life you have two things to provide for. You have this life itself to provide for, and you have the next also; but of the two you see clearly, that the providing for the next is of the most consequence to you, and the most reasonable thing to do, because this life is short, and the next will never end."

He assented to this, and the ground appearing to be made firm, I attempted another advance. "Do you know," I asked, "that the next world will be all joy, or all sorrow?" "Why, Sir," he answered, "I have heard say so." "Yes," I said, "God himself has told us this in the Bible. The next world will be very different from the present. Here things change about continually; sometimes they are better, sometimes they are worse; and we ourselves appear to be able (with God's blessing) to do something for ourselves. But hereafter it will not be so; things will never change any more. If we go to heaven, we shall be happy for ever; if to hell, we shall be miserable for ever; and, when we are there, there is nothing that we can do to help ourselves at all, either to get out of the misery, or even to lessen it. Now, if you understand this, you will also understand, that the reason becomes tenfold stronger, why it is of



more importance to you to provide for the next life than for the present. If you fall into any calamity here, you might say to yourself, well, I will be more careful in future ; I will be more industrious ; I will be more sober, or what not ? And so you bear your calamity the better, from hoping and thinking that you may overcome it by changing your own mode of life. But suppose you knew to a certainty, that, in spite of all your efforts, your calamity would always continue the same ; how should you feel *then* ?” “ I should be quite cast down, Sir,” he replied. “ Which calamities then are most terrible ?” I asked. “ Such as you may possibly remedy, or those which it is impossible for you to remedy, by any contrivances through all eternity ?” “ There can only be one opinion about this, Sir,” he answered. “ Very well, then,” I said, “ hell is full of such calamities as cannot be remedied ; and, besides *that*, the calamities themselves will be unspeakably grievous and horrible ; in one word, hell is a lake of fire and brimstone, burning for ever, and yet never consuming those, whether devils or men, who are thrown into it. Is there anything conceivable more to be provided against than this ?” “ No, indeed,” he replied, “ nothing, Sir.”

“ Well, but,” I said, now bringing the argument to a point, “ if you remember, we agreed, that the provision to be made against this eternity of pain and misery could only be made whilst we are here.” “ It is very true, Sir,” he answered. “ Tell me then next,” I said, “ whether you think, that, if you could save your affairs from going to wreck and ruin, and could drive a good trade, as your father did, it would save your soul also from the miserable eternity.”

Half an hour ago this idea would have been as entirely new to him as it is to an infant to learn his letters ; and I am not sure, that it was very different now. However, he was silent ; and whether, or not, he was pursuing in his mind any train of thought to enable himself to discover the connexion between the two propositions, of driving a good trade, and saving his soul, I cannot tell ; but, at all events, I left it to him to ruminate for the present at his own will, whilst we were both of us still proceeding slowly along the path with countless memorials of death on each hand. Then suddenly observing that we were now just opposite to his father's grave, and, indeed, very near to it, I stopped short, and said, " Here he is buried, I believe." " Yes, Sir," he answered, " this is the place, sure enough." " Well," I said, " I hope God has been merciful to his soul ; but I fear that the flourishing of his business in this lower world did not help forward the greater business of his salvation in the world above." This observation, on my part, drew none from my companion ; so I questioned him thus :—" Did not your poor father spend a vast deal of money in liquor ?" " Yes, Sir," he replied, " or I should not have wanted capital now to carry on the trade." " Do you think," I asked again, " that drunkenness is pleasing to God ?" " No, indeed," he answered, " I know it cannot be." " How did your father get the money which he spent in drunkenness ?" I asked thirdly. " Why, by his business, to be sure, Sir," he replied. " But suppose," I said, " that his business had not prospered ; what then ?" " Oh ! then," he answered, " there would have been no money to spend." " So, in that case," I said, " your father must needs have been

sober ; must he not ?" " He must indeed," was his reply. " And God loves soberness, does he not ?" " Yes, Sir," he answered. " Then it seems after all," I said, " that your father would have been nearer to heaven, so far as drunkenness and sobriety are concerned, if he had been a poorer man, or less prosperous in his trade." " I never thought of this, before, Sir," he replied ; " but it is very true." " It is true, no doubt," I said ; " and your poor father had other vices, in which he could not have indulged without plenty of money ; and the money, you tell me, could not have been had without a flourishing trade ; so that if his trade had gone to wreck and ruin long before he died, it might have been all the better for him ; because, these vices having been entirely relinquished, he would have had less to repent of, and would not have been so far from the kingdom of God. Let him, however, have been as distant as many vices might have caused him to be, there is one good Being who was able to bring him near, if he sought his help sincerely and fervently. Your father may have done this ; I hope he did ; I am sure he was deeply affected with the thought of his sins and of the next world ; but I advise *you*, his son, to begin your repentance, and your provision for eternity much earlier than he did ; and to care less about driving a good trade, and more about the safety of your soul. There is one awful consideration for you ; that, if God has graciously spared your father after such a life, he will certainly not spare *you* after the same ; because you will have despised and set at nought the terrible warning of your own father's death."

The quivering of his lips betokened some feeling

of this momentous subject ; but I was not satisfied ; so I asked him if the funeral had not been attended by a great crowd of people. " It was, indeed," he said. " But it was very plain and simple : was it not ?" I asked again. " Yes, Sir," he answered, " we had no wish to make a shew." " Then it must have been something extraordinary," I said, " in the life, or death of your father, or in both coupled together, which attracted the multitude of spectators." He was silent, and seemed to be thinking how this might be ; so I went on thus : " They felt perhaps as I did, Mr. White. I abstained from burying your father myself, because the circumstances of a person like your father, dying as your father did, are always very affecting to me ; and my curate told me, that they appeared to be so to everybody else ; for that a pin might have been heard to drop whilst he was reading the burial-service ; and that more especially, when he said, ' in the midst of life we are in death,' there was such a silence as clearly shewed the opinion which they entertained of the awful event ; namely, that your father had been cut down in the vigour of manhood by the just judgments of God. No other account can be given of this matter."

He seemed to be touched a little by this ; so I continued thus :—" I do not mean, as you very well know from what I have said before, that your poor father has been condemned for ever because his days have been cut short here ; nor is the one the necessary consequence of the other. On the contrary, I believe that God often punishes men in this world, that he may spare them in the next. Your father's life was a wicked one, no doubt ; we all knew it too well. I do not say this to give you pain, but to caution you

how you expose yourself to the same hazards, or make it necessary for God, if he would save your soul, to correct you here with some grievous calamity ; to stretch you on a sick-bed with racking pain ; to compel you, by the terror of approaching death, to submit your diseased limbs to the knife and the saw ; and after all to strike you down in the middle of your course by such a blow as makes all the wicked to tremble. This was the appearance of things in your father's case ; this is the way in which the people explained it to themselves ; this drew them to the funeral, and held them there in a silent reverential awe of the doings of God. Let it not, I beseech you, be thrown away upon yourself, Mr. White ; it seems to have made a wholesome impression upon others, and it would be strange if it made none upon *you*, for whose warning God chiefly intended it."

We were still standing opposite to the grave, and just at this moment the church-clock struck nine. To *my* ears the sound was solemn enough, clanging away, and breaking the deep silence and repose which reigned amidst the repositories of the dead, and reminding me of the lapse of time which swallows us all up in his devouring gulph. To my companion it was nothing, as it seemed, but the simple measure of the passing hours. He counted the strokes, and, probably unmoved by other considerations, hereckoned only how long he had been there, and how long he had to stay till the dawning day released him.

I prepared to be gone : for I knew that I should be wanted at home ; so I said, "Your father neglected the church, Mr. White, and hitherto you have followed his example. Do you expect God's blessing

upon your labours, if you give him no public honour ; if you never come where he promises to bestow a peculiar blessing upon those who worship him with the heart ; if you never join in any of his sacred ordinances, which are the means by which he conveys his blessing to us ?” “ You may depend upon seeing me there very soon, Sir,” he answered. “ I am glad to hear of your good intention,” I said : “ and you may assure yourself of this, that, whilst you live without a God, it will not bring you any real profit, if you should drive the best trade in the world ; whereas, on the other hand, if you serve him faithfully, and repose upon his providence, you will be one of the happiest men alive, although your trade should go to wreck and ruin. Never forget this. It is true as God is true.”

Upon this I left him to meditate upon my paradox. To *him*, in his infant state of religious knowledge and feeling, what I had pronounced confidently was, without doubt, the greatest of paradoxes. However, Sunday after Sunday passed, and I saw him not. I spoke to his mother, whom I found out in her new abode ; I spoke to his wife ; I met *him* himself, and upbraided him again and again ; he made excuses, and renewed his promises as often ; but to this day, two months since his father's death, he has never been to church. Yet he always says, “ Next Sunday, Sir, you will certainly see me there ; I have made all my arrangements to be able to come next Sunday.” No doubt, the service of the church must be peculiarly irksome to one who has not been brought up to it from his youth, and who lies in ignorance and wickedness. He cannot understand what is said there ; much less can he feel it.

§ 4.—*Mrs. Brockbourn's Daughter.*

WHILST this intercourse with the White family was in progress, a newspaper first informed me of the trial and acquittal of Jacob Brockbourn, as it had done before of the murder imputed to him. I was anxious to know what he would do with himself; and I soon learnt from John Harwich, that he had returned to the service of his former master. In fact, by the newspaper account, it was the evidence of his master with respect to his sobriety, industry, and regularity in his business, combined with that of Mrs. Martin as to his indulgence towards his wife, and her not complaining of him in her last moments, which preserved him from an untimely and ignominious end. How other circumstances, so strong against him, were got over and disregarded, I cannot tell. "Have you seen him yourself, Harwich?" I enquired, "Yes, Sir," he answered; "I saw him on the same day that he was tried at night. He came to thank Mrs. Martin for her evidence, which saved him, I believe." "And how did he behave?" I asked. "Oh! he takes on him sadly, Sir," he replied. "He cried that night like a child, Sir; and he is very low every day from morning to night." "I am glad to hear it," I said, "and I should like very much to see him. I might, perhaps, be of use to him, if he would come to me. Could you speak to him for me, Harwich, and tell him my desire?" "To be sure I could, Sir," he answered. "Where does he live?" I asked. "Oh! he lives, Sir, I understand, at the Three Cranes." "That is a great way," I said, from your house, Harwich; I cannot trouble you to

go so far." "It is nothing for *me*, Sir," he replied ; "I will be sure to go to him, and tell him."

Having made this provision for a conversation with the acquitted murderer, for several days I was in constant and anxious expectation of his appearance at the rectory ; but no Jacob Brockbourn was announced to me, to the great disappointment of my whole family as well as myself. At length I called at the Three Cranes in person, and several of my children were with me. This pot-house was kept by a Mrs. Pastor, with whom I had lately established an acquaintance by visiting a sick lodger. It happened that she came from Brockbourn's parish, and had perfectly known both *him* and his poor wife for many years ; which was the reason that she now gave him a shelter in his distress, when others were afraid or ashamed to do it.

When she came to me at the door, "You have got Jacob Brockbourn here for a lodger," I said ; "have you not, Mrs. Pastor ?" "Yes, Sir," she answered, "he is here of a truth." "Is he within now ?" I asked. "No, Sir," she replied ; "he is out at his work. He goes early in the morning, and comes back after work is done in the evening ; then he gets his supper, sits a little while, drinks his pint of beer, and goes quietly to bed. He is very sober, Sir, and orderly." "This looks well," I said ; "and is he as much depressed in his mind by sorrow, as they tell me that he is ?" "It seemed so, Sir," she replied ; "and I thought there was no occasion for him to take on him so grievously ; so I began to joke him, like, and to make merry with him about it, Sir." "Did you indeed ?" I said. "I am sorry for *that*. A man who has done what *he* has done should never



be otherwise than in a serious mood." "Why, I never will believe, Sir," she answered, "that he meant to take her life. And, as to a good beating, she richly deserved it, Sir. I knew her from a child, Sir; and if these children were not here, I could tell you such stories of her; but it would not be right to speak out before these children." In fact, the children were all pressing close round us, and listening with the very utmost attention to catch every word that she uttered. Nothing could exceed their eagerness to know all the history of Jacob Brockbourn; and, now that I am writing it, together with all the transactions which sprung out of it, they snatch the sheets from me, sheet after sheet, and sometimes before the ink is dry. "No, indeed," I said, "you must be careful what you tell us. But there is no need to tell any of those bad stories; I can imagine them easily enough." Mrs. Pastor, however, was not satisfied with leaving the business to my imagination; so she drew me gently within the doorway; and put her mouth close to one of my ears, and whispered softly, "Why, Sir, she would do any thing with any ragged fellow, man or boy, for a glass of gin; and, then, Sir, you must guess the consequences. These were the cause of her death, not the bruises on her head. She burst something in her inside; and that killed her. She said so herself, Sir, to some who stood by her, and were pitying her on account of the bloody wounds, which was all that they could see: 'Ah!' she cried, 'it is not those; the death-wound is here,' laying her hand on her body."

Having heard all this, "Pray, Mrs. Pastor," I asked, "how came Jacob Brockbourn to marry a woman with such bad diseases, and such wicked

Habits, with two children besides, born in her sinful practices?" "Ah! Sir," she replied mournfully, "there is no accounting for these things, I thought him mad, to be sure; but she wheedled him into it, I suppose. You know the tricks of such women, Sir." Here Mrs. Pastor gave me credit for a greater knowledge of human nature than I pretend to possess. However, I said solemnly, "Be she whatever she might have been, Mrs. Pastor; he knew what she was, and with God for his witness, he took her for better, for worse; and he bound himself under the strongest engagements, before the same Almighty God, to love her and to cherish her, till death loosed the holy knot which tied them together; death, in the course of nature, not by his own lawless and cruel violence."

This reduced Mrs. Pastor to silence; so I added, "Upon considering the matter, therefore, you see, he has good reason enough to be serious. But does he perform any act of religion that you know of?" I enquired. "Oh! yes, Sir," she answered, "he goes to church every Sunday evening at six o'clock, which is the only time that his master can spare him; and his sister, who lives in a respectable service in the great town, has given him some good little books, (*tracts*, I believe they call them, Sir,) which he always has in his hands, and keeps with him in his bed." "But can he read?" I asked. "Why, I really cannot tell, Sir, she said; and then, having thought for an instant, she exclaimed, "Upon my word, Sir, I believe he cannot read." "Well, then," I said, "these tracts will do him neither good, nor harm, unless somebody reads and explains them to him; is *that* the case?" "Not to my knowledge,

Sir," she answered; "and I think I should know, if it were done." This information about the tracts made me more desirous to see the man himself; for I feared lest they might be of a fanatical description, and in his present frame of mind, if read to him, might push him to desperation, or raise him to a groundless confidence; so I besought Mrs. Pastor by all means to send him to me as soon as possible with his tracts in his pocket; which she promised to do, and then I took my leave of her.

Again, I was all expectation; but it seemed as if I should not succeed in obtaining the interview which I so much desired. However, about this time, I saw another person, who, doubtless, has interested the reader in her favour; I mean poor Mrs. Brockbourn's daughter. Having called at the house where she was in service, I did not find her master, her mistress, or herself at home; but having just dropped a hint to the servant, who conducted me about the place, (it was a new place,) of the chief cause of my visit, he informed her of it, and she came to me the following morning at an early hour. Her appearance and manner were prepossessing; there was a simplicity and modesty about her which were very pleasing: and her behaviour, whilst she was with me, strengthened the first impression, and won my good opinion.

I was passing through the hall, where she had been placed to wait for me; but as she had not been announced, I did not know who she was. As soon as she saw me she curtsied, but did not tell me her name, and seemed to have some difficulty in mentioning it. She was in mourning, and looked very melancholy; and I took it for granted that she was one of those numerous petitioners who come to me for relief, or advice.

"Do you wish to speak with me, young woman?" I enquired with gentleness. "I do not recollect your countenance." "I am the person, Sir," she answered, bursting into tears, "whom you so kindly came to see yesterday." "I am glad that you are come to me," I said. "I wish to have some conversation with you. By all accounts you are a respectable and good young woman; and you seem to feel as you ought to do." Then I took her by the hand, and led her into a room, and made her sit down; and I sat down myself very near to her, that we might be able to talk in a lower tone. She was gratified apparently with this attention on my part, and smiled through her tears, and was soon prepared for conversation.

"You have met with a very great calamity," I said, "and you are very young; and I was afraid, that you might not perhaps reflect upon your calamity, as it would be useful for you to do. Too many of the young are giddy and thoughtless, and have no understanding to see when God is instructing and warning them. I have reason, however, to think, from report, that this is not your case; but I wished to be more sure of it than I could be from report alone. This is the cause of my calling to enquire after you; and I approve very much of your not waiting for the chance of my calling again, but taking the first opportunity to come here to me yourself. This shews good sense and proper feeling. Silly people get out of the way of the clergyman; his presence and conversation are disagreeable and tiresome to them; they hate to be lectured, and they expect that lecturing is his only object. But I would comfort you, my good young

woman, if I could ; and, at all events, I would endeavour to improve you, and make you dearer to God—God is now become every thing to you. You have no other parent now to care for you, or to love and obey in return. He is all in this world, and all in the next ; and he alone is enough. The fatherless and the motherless will never want any other father or mother besides *him*, if they are so wise as to fear him, and trust in him."

This little speech appeared to please her in the beginning, and it affected her deeply in the end. The moment that I began to allude to her orphan-state, I perceived her eyes full of tears, which soon burst their narrow boundaries, and flowed profusely down her cheeks. Still, however, as she wiped them away with her pocket-handkerchief, she kept her eyes fixed upon me, and listened with all her attention, as if to lose nothing which I might say. To give her time to collect herself, I enquired about her age, education, and present circumstances ; and I found them to be nearly as they had been represented to me. She went to church also, she informed me, as often as her mistress could spare her, and always at the six o'clock service, which was the most convenient for her. " And what have you done with your poor brother ?" I enquired next. " I have sent him back, Sir," she answered, " to the place of his birth. He has an uncle there, who has promised to take care of him. I could not endure the thought of his remaining with his mother's murderer. He was very fond of him, Sir ; but I could not bear that he should be with him any longer."

There was a great deal of right principle in this ; but she seemed to speak of Brockbourn with too

much acrimony. So I said, "You do not mean, I hope, to call Jacob Brockbourn a murderer in the strict sense of the word? He was sent to prison indeed as a murderer, and tried on that supposition; but, you know, he was acquitted by the jury almost immediately, and, with very little deliberation on their part, pronounced innocent of that horrible offence of murder." "Yes, Sir," she replied, "it was so, certainly; and I cannot believe in my heart that he intended to murder my poor mother. But, ah! Sir," she added with sobs, "there was nobody to speak for *her* at the trial, whilst there were plenty of people to speak for *him*. *Her* character was blackened sadly, Sir, to set him off. Nothing was too bad to say of *her*, if it might but save *him*. Nevertheless, he did not wish to kill her, I dare say."

"I hear from all quarters of his industry," I said; "is that account of him true?" "Yes, Sir," she answered; "he was always very constant at his work." "And he is a sober man too; is he not?" I asked. "I cannot say much for *that*, Sir," she replied, "he was often tipsy." "In what state was he that dreadful night?" I enquired. "He was tipsy, Sir, without doubt," she answered. "He had been drinking in our village, Sir; and I heard of his being tipsy long before he went home; yes, very early in the day." "He passes," I said, "for a sober man, but it may be only with those who are disposed to favour him, or who are very guilty of drunkenness themselves. His was probably not a habit of drunkenness like theirs, and so they call him a sober man. But he was kind and indulgent to your unfortunate mother, was he not?" "Ah! Sir," she replied, "he used to beat her very often, and very severely. I

cannot deny, Sir, that my poor mother was given to drinking ; but I think it was his ill usage which drove her to it." " Did he beat her generally," I asked, " when he was sober ; or when he was intoxicated ?" She hesitated a little, and then she said, " I suppose, Sir, it was when he was intoxicated." " And did he not always," I asked again, " accuse your poor mother of being intoxicated, when he beat her ?" " I believe he did, Sir," she answered ; " but I do not know that it was true." " What did she herself say of him in her moments of agony ?" I enquired. " At first, Sir," she replied, " all her cry was, to pursue him, and take him. She hoped and prayed, that he might be taken, and executed." " Was not that spoken," I said, " whilst she was delirious ?" " Perhaps it was, Sir," she answered ; " for afterwards, about the middle of the day, she said over and over again, that she wished he might escape ; and so we never told her, Sir, to the last, that he was taken, lest it might make her more uneasy than she was."

This was quite new to me, and I do not know how to interpret it otherwise, than on the supposition, that the poor woman thought him guilty of the intention to murder her. Her first cry, that she wished him to be taken and hanged, was natural enough, and proves nothing with respect to the opinion which she might have formed of his intention towards her. It was uttered whilst she was yet drunk, and half insensible ; full of rage and the spirit of revenge, and smarting with the first anguish of her wounds. Her subsequent wish, that he might not be taken, which was in her cooler moments, and when she saw death approaching, is a strong fact. If she herself con-

sidered her death to be merely accidental, she would suppose, no doubt, that her husband would be able to prove it to be so, and consequently would be in no danger of suffering by it. After all, however, whatever her own opinion might be, it would not be decisive of the question. But this is evident, that, as many circumstances of this kind, bearing forcibly upon that question, were not brought forward at the trial, and as the same thing generally happens in all cases, the proceedings in our courts of justice are very favourable to the guilty, and the punishment of innocence is morally impossible.

In answer to what the young woman had now told me, I said, "I am rejoiced to hear that your poor mother went out of the world without any feeling of revenge in her heart. It seems that she had quite overcome it; and I knew this before from Mrs. Martin, who proved it to me by much stronger circumstances even than that which you have now related. She forgave every body expressly who had ever injured her; even *him*, who was, whether intentionally or not, the cause of her death; and if she believed him to be the intentional cause, her forgiving him was a more noble and more Christian act; a most excellent part, I assure you, my good young woman, of our preparation to meet the great Judge. None, who refuse forgiveness to others, have any right to ask, or expect, forgiveness themselves. With respect to the circumstance of the poor man being generally kind and indulgent to your unhappy mother, and of your mother herself having constantly spoken of him to that effect, this too has been told me by Mrs. Martin; and, I think, she is a person to be trusted. Have you any reason to think otherwise?"



"No, indeed, Sir," she answered; "and I shall always be very grateful to Mrs. Martin for her attentions to my poor mother before she was carried to the hospital. But she has not known Mr. Brockbourn long enough, Sir. He was a man that was all by fits and starts. He was kind enough, to be sure, sometimes; and then he seemed as if he would have been glad to have seen her clothed in gold, and he bought her a new gown, or shawl, or what not, Sir. But then, Sir, at other times he would neither speak to *her*, nor to any body else. It was his nature, Sir, to be very reserved and silent; he would come in at night from his work, and go to bed without saying a word to any of us; and often it was worse: for he was sullen and dark in his brow; he appeared to be brooding over something in his thoughts; and then perhaps he would break out into harsh and severe language, if things did not please him, or do some wild act in his fury, as he did, Sir, in that piteous night. For at one stroke, Sir, I believe, before he touched her, he crashed all the plates and dishes that were ranged on the shelf. But my dear mother, Sir, had a different temper. She was always disposed to be cheerful and merry, and to visit and chat with her neighbours; and the gloominess of her home caused her to seek for these pleasures the more often abroad; and this led to drinking, Sir. Ah! Sir, they have a sad custom, even the women, of entertaining one another with liquor, and when once they begin, they do not know where to stop. It generally ends, Sir, in downright drunkenness. So it was, I think, Sir, that my poor mother became entangled in that unfortunate habit; and, God knows, she has suffered for it!" Here the poor girl burst into tears afresh, but

soon added, "if I had not been forced to go out to get my bread, Sir, this would not have happened."

It was impossible not to admire the filial piety of this young woman; but I knew too well, that the account, which she gave of her mother, was the partial account of an affectionate and dutiful daughter, not the strict truth. The strict truth, indeed, was perhaps unknown to her, in all its circumstances; but even what she did know was warped exceedingly, by a desire, highly amiable and filial, of extenuating her mother's faults. I have put what she said altogether; but, in speaking it, it happened that she was often interrupted, and obliged to pause, and afterwards, she went on again when the interruption ceased. And, I believe, it was fortunate for her; for the interruptions were of such a nature as to reanimate and reassure her, when she was deeply affected by her own descriptions. The room in which we were sitting was the exclusive property of the children, and they were continually coming in, sometimes one and sometimes another, partly upon their own concerns, but more especially to see the young woman herself; about whom, as they were acquainted with her good character, and with her grief for her poor mother's loss, their little hearts were warmly interested. The consequence was, that each of them as they passed her chair, stood still for a moment, and looked up into her face, with so much compassion and good will beaming from their countenances, that it seemed to alleviate her sorrow; and, as she had done before to *me*, she smiled upon them through her tears.

When she appeared to have said all that she intended or wished, I replied to her in the following manner:—"It is very likely, indeed, my good young

woman, with your right disposition, and the many kindnesses which you did to your unhappy mother, that, if you had been able to be much with her, you might have been of great service to her. But it was proper, as you say, that you should go out to get your own bread ; and it was not to be expected that your mistress should spare you as often as it would have been necessary for you to go in order to be useful. It was Providence which ordained your lot to be as it is ; and I am sure, therefore, that there is nothing, the unavoidable consequence of that lot, with which you have any just occasion to reproach yourself. You may naturally grieve, indeed, that you could not do more than you did ; but after all, you must leave every thing to the mercy of God, and go on to perform your own duty in your own station. I console myself in some degree with the hope, and I mention it to *you* for *your* consolation, that, as your poor mother suffered so bitterly and tremendously in this world, and yet left it with a wish upon her tongue that no harm might overtake even *him* whom, perhaps, she considered to be her wilful murderer ; and as besides she both prayed to God for pardon, and desired to be taught how to pray better than she did, there was room for the divine goodness to accept, for Christ's sake, these the best offerings in her power, whilst her body and mind were agonised with pain and dismay." Then clasping my hands, and looking upwards, I said with a solemn, devout tone, " May they, indeed, have been already accepted above ! "

A short silence ensued, the young woman herself weeping too abundantly to be able to speak, and also deeply affecting *me* with her sorrow. At length I

resumed my speech thus, adverting to another of her topics. " You see, my young friend, distinctly now, what calamities are brought upon us by vicious indulgences, and you very properly abominate them. Pray, beware then, yourself, of the first step! You know not whither it may carry you. If men offer you liquor, think that they offer you poison, and reject it with abhorrence. In truth it *is* poison, quick, or slow, according to circumstances; in the end it poisons both mind and body; it was the cause of every other vice into which your mother fell, and at last of her death. But if no such terrible event were to follow, what would be the value of the pleasure which it purchases? Ah! call it not cheerfulness and mirth; you will deceive yourself by such names, which sound like good-nature, good-humour, and innocence. But the cheerfulness and mirth of that fearful night at least were widely different; yes, and of many more nights besides. One that passed by would have heard indeed from a distance the voices of joy; the loud laugh, and the full chorus of song; and he might have said to himself, these people are merry and happy. But if he looked in amongst them, he would see that it was all a drunken revel. His ears would be shocked with their filthy songs and jokes, and his eyes with numberless indecencies which I will forbear to mention. Guard, I beseech you, against the least approach to anything like this. You would soon be entangled, as you well described it, and could no longer escape—you would soon be insensible to your own shame, and be brought to delight in *that* which might ruin you for ever. God teaches you this lesson by a sad experience for a

daughter; if you will learn it, as I trust you will, true happiness, which springs from innocence alone, awaits you—you will be in favour with God and man."

"I will do my best, Sir," she answered, wiping away her tears; "indeed, if I do not, I shall be without excuse. My poor mother will never be out of my head, I am sure; and when I think of *her*, I shall have reason enough to hate liquor." "You will indeed," I said, "and all the wretched places which might tempt you to gratify the lowest and basest of your appetites. When you pass them in future, you will shudder, and silently remark to yourself, 'Death stands at these doors, with his dart ready to strike, though we do not see him. I will shun them for my life; nay, even for my soul.' How is it, in truth, that any woman can so utterly throw off, what seem to be her most natural ornaments, modesty and sobriety, as to enter there? At first, probably, her conscience smiting her, yet urged by her desire of drink, she prowls up and down the street at night, watching for a moment when the gin-shop may be empty, and then she darts in, and pours down the destructive liquor in haste, and is gone in an instant without being noticed. But soon she is seen by somebody, and it costs her a blush and a pang. However, by little and little she overcomes all obstacles, and breaks through all the fences which God, and nature, and her sex have planted around her for her protection; and at last she will go boldly, in the face of day, and whoever may look on; nay, on the very Sabbath; and then she comes reeling forth again, a disgusting spectacle

to all, whilst good men tremble for her, and the very angels themselves, who ministered to her salvation, weep, and leave her."

Having paused here to collect myself a little, (for I was touched with my own picture,) and soon observing that my visitor was fixed in deep attention, and apparently much impressed with my admonition, I went on again thus—"What I tell you, my good young woman, is no idle imagination of my own, but a true fact, and the usual progress of vice. This last step I have seen too often myself. Would you believe it, that a woman, a near neighbour of your poor mother's, and very shortly after her terrible death, in contempt of the divine warning, met me in the public road, on the Sabbath-day, in the drunken state which I have described?" "I could not have believed it, Sir," she replied, turning pale, and holding her handkerchief to her eyes, "at least without great difficulty, if it had not been what you saw yourself." "No, indeed," I said, "it is difficult to believe it at any rate; for it is the same as if a person should rush voluntarily, blindfold, and headlong, to the very brink of a precipice, a thousand feet high, with a lake of fire at the bottom. But I will tell you another thing to put you on your guard. Young women, like yourself, are sometimes persuaded by young men, who are their lovers, or pretend to be so, to go with them into those odious and pernicious houses. If a man really loved you he would do it perhaps out of kindness; but it would be a false kindness, and he would be a very foolish and a very cruel lover; because he might thus lay the foundation of misery for himself and for *you* too. If he only pretended to love you, his conduct would be intelligible enough.

He wishes your ruin ; so he begins with stripping you of modesty and shame, that he may afterwards strip you of a still brighter jewel, your innocence and virtue. But if you lose these, what will you become then ?—miserable, whilst you live, at any rate ; and, perhaps, to try to drown your misery, you will plunge deeper into it, and end in being the very refuse of the streets.”

She sobbed aloud at this description, but I continued without stopping. “ If a young man then should propose to you a thing of this sort, reject the thing, and the man too, at once. You cannot know whether he is your real, or your pretended lover ; but you will certainly know, that he is foolish, or wicked ; and neither of the two would be safe persons for you to trust.” Our conversation having now exceeded the time which I could conveniently spare, I said, “ I will not talk to you any longer on this subject—you seem to feel, and I hope you will act, as I wish ; which I am sure will be for your own peace of mind, and for your true happiness.” “ It will indeed, Sir,” she replied, with a faltering voice, and then she added decisively, “ I will never, all my life, Sir, have to do with such places, or with those who would entice me to go there.” “ I trust that God will enable you to keep so good a resolution steadily and inviolably,” I said ; “ but now tell me whether you have seen Jacob Brockbourn at the evening-church. I hear that he has been there every Sunday of the few which have elapsed since his discharge from prison.” “ No, Sir,” she answered, with an appearance of surprise at my question, “ I have not seen him there, but I have seen him two or three times in the streets of our village.” “ Have you spoken to

him?" I asked. "No, Sir," she replied; rather horror-struck, "it would make me tremble all over, to speak to him." "How was it then?" I asked again. "The first time, Sir," she answered, "I was walking with a fellow-servant, and he followed me backwards and forwards, as if he desired to talk with me; but whether it was that he wanted courage himself to speak, or that he saw I was afraid of him, or that he would not speak whilst I had a companion with me, I cannot tell. However, Sir, he has since met me alone, and he passed without a word. I kept my eyes fixed upon the ground, to be sure, when I was near him, and discouraged him as much as I could; but at any rate, Sir, I never mean to have anything more to do with him. I cannot, Sir; indeed I cannot; it would be too painful to me."

"I much doubt, my good young woman, whether you are in the right," I said; "but perhaps you do not know enough of the present feelings of the man, supposing the accounts of him to be true. I have enquired a great deal about him, and I am told by all, that he is exceedingly depressed in his mind; for the calamity which has happened, no doubt; and I should think that he was very desirous of making you any reparation in his power for the grief and loss which he has occasioned you; and, more particularly, of satisfying you, if possible, that the melancholy event was accidental and not intentional. I should certainly advise you to give him an opportunity of doing as much as this; but I by no means advise you to be on the same terms with him as formerly. Even the Gospel itself, which breathes a constant spirit of forgiveness and charity, requires nothing of that sort. It requires us to pardon our



enemies, and all who have injured us ; and even to cherish sentiments of good will towards them. But it does not require us to live with them, or to treat them as if nothing had occurred to separate us. If he had acquired any rights over you by being your step-father, you may perhaps justly think that he has now forfeited them all. I am myself not sufficiently informed to give an opinion upon that point. However, if his object in speaking to you be such as I have conjectured, his being your step-father certainly is an additional and a forcible reason for granting his request. If it would be a consolation to him to ask you to forgive him, in God's name let him have it ; and after you have once talked with him, you will probably see your way more clearly."

Upon this the young woman was wrapped in silence, and seemed to be revolving in her own thoughts the consequence of rejecting, or complying with my advice. To comply would cost her, no doubt, a difficult struggle ; to reject might appear contemptuous and ungrateful towards *me*, who had no interest in view, as she must have been perfectly aware, but her own welfare, and must reasonably be supposed to know better than herself in what her duty and welfare consisted. Observing her perplexity I rose from my chair, and said, " I will detain you no longer now ; consider the matter at your leisure. I will call again at Mr. Browne's, and enquire how you are proceeding. My eye will be always carefully upon you ; and I am sure, it will give me great pleasure to hear that you are doing well." She had now risen from her chair herself, and seemed to be much relieved by my not pressing her for an immediate determination ; so she thanked me again and again, and made me many curtsies, and hastened homewards.

§ 5.—*The Hodges Family.*

AFTER this, some days elapsed, and still no Jacob Brockbourn appeared. But one morning, as I passed by the cluster, I had the satisfaction of hearing from Mrs. Martin, that the young woman had written to him, and had received an answer. What was the exact purport of these letters she could not inform me, but I myself could easily conjecture; especially when I understood that a meeting was to take place in consequence of them at some early opportunity. But Mrs. Martin gave me a still greater satisfaction when she assured me, that the event, which I had been long anxiously expecting, would most certainly very soon occur; for that Jacob Brockbourn had visited her again, and had told her himself, that he both intended and wished to see me, and only delayed his call, till he could make it at some hour which would be perfectly convenient to me. "Let him come to me then," I said, "in the evening, whenever he pleases; for *that* will be convenient both to *me* and to *him*."

On this same day I at length found the young Mrs. Hodges at home, and I had been already informed by Mrs. Martin, that she was desirous of some conversation with me. I was glad of this, because it betokened, I thought, a wish for her own improvement, or implied at least that she considered it of some consequence to her to stand fairer in my opinion than she yet did. So I went to her without loss of time, and with pleasant anticipations. She had her fire up-stairs, and was sitting there, as I discovered afterwards, quite alone; but at first, when I

called to her by her name, she came down to me in the apartment below, which was very desolate and disagreeable, having no furniture in it, and being only used, as it seemed, for a store-house of bones. Of these there was a large heap in one corner; and, putrefaction having begun in the flesh attached to them, I retired hastily with my children, some of whom happened to be with me, beyond the door-way into the open air. The wind was blowing bitterly cold; but the rude blast was pure and sweet at least, and therefore far preferable to the noxious, charnel-house scent of the bones.

Mrs. Hodges herself now stood in the door-way, and I had a full opportunity of observing her. She was pretty; but the character of her beauty was entirely ruined, when she began to talk, by the levity, and the boldness, and the ill-humour, which by turns displayed themselves in every feature of her face. She was very young withal; so young indeed in appearance, that she might easily be mistaken for one not far advanced in her teens; but her age perhaps might be as much as seventeen or eighteen years. 'Alas!' I thought to myself, 'that a person, looking like a mere child, should have already seen and practised, so early in life, the very utmost profligacy, to which she might be expected to arrive after a long period, and by slow steps. By some unfortunate concatenation of events, unknown to me, she has acquired almost at once all the habits of vice, and she does not seem to be conscious of her own depravity.' Yet she was not pale, but had a bloom upon her countenance, which might have been taken for a symptom of health; but I discovered afterwards, that it was only the effect of the fire. In fact

she was but just up, and still at her breakfast ; too sure a proof that the night had been ill spent in riotous living. Her hair, as before, was done up in curl-papers, which were not of the cleanliest sort ; and, as for her face and hands, she had not yet found time to wash them. In no respect was she either decent, or tidy. In short, at this hour of the day she was a dirty slattern. But such another opportunity of speaking to her might never occur, whilst Mrs. Brockbourn's death was fresh in her recollection ; so I shut my eyes against annoyances, and began as follows ; having first dismissed my children, under pretence of the cold wind, to run about at their pleasure till I had done.

" Mrs. Hodges," I said, " although you are a stranger in this parish, you know very well, I believe, who I am, and for what purpose I have been here amongst you so often of late, and why I have been desirous of seeing *you* in particular." " I cannot tell, Sir," she answered, tossing her head, " why you particularly wished to see *me* ; but I know that you have enquired after me, and talked about me to others ; and I dare say you have heard plenty of bad things about me, but they are false, Sir, quite false, depend upon it." " Why, yes, Mrs. Hodges," I said, " I have heard some bad things of you, certainly ; and I will tell you presently what they are, that, if they are false, you may prove them to be so to my satisfaction, if you can, and if you wish it. But perhaps it may appear strange to you, that I should concern myself about *you*, or your actions, at all. I must first, therefore, inform you, that I take a deep interest, as it is my duty to do, in the welfare of my parishioners ; and that I am anxious more espe-

cially about their souls, whether they are likely to be saved or not ; because it is their souls, chiefly, which God has put under my care." At this she turned her face from me with a half-stifled laugh, as if it were mere talk, or as if she knew nothing, or cared nothing about her soul ; but I proceeded, without rebuking her, till I had advanced further into my subject. " And how," I said, wishing her to apply it to herself, " how could I consider *their* souls to be safe, who had anything to do with the horrible deed, which has lately been committed here ? Believe me, Mrs. Hodges, there are more persons than one, who will be called to a dreadful account for this deed hereafter, unless they make their peace with God before they die. And, therefore, fearing, as I do, that he might snatch them out of this world, in his anger, without giving them time to prepare themselves to meet him in the next, if they throw away or abuse the precious moments which he still allows them, I have come amongst you, again and again, to warn you, and to beseech you, not to put off the most necessary of all works ; the work of sorrow for your sins, and reformation of your lives." Nothing of this seemed to touch her at all, and I went on thus—" You have seen, by a tremendous example, how unexpectedly and suddenly a person may be taken away with all her sins upon her head. But if God has caused you to see such a thing, without doubt he intended that you should lay it to heart ; and, without doubt also, if, in spite of it, you go on in the same course, he will punish you the more severely and the more terribly, either here or hereafter. He is a consuming fire to those who despise him. I tremble therefore for many of you ; for I

observe no change in them for the better ; but I tremble more especially for *you*, Mrs. Hodges."

"For *me*, Sir!" she exclaimed, either with surprise, or only affecting it, (I do not know which,) "for *me*? Why for *me*, Sir? I cannot understand your meaning." "I will tell you plainly," I said, "because, otherwise, I perceive, there will be no chance of my being useful to you. In *my* eye, and, I should fear, in the eye of God too, you are one of those who are guilty of Mrs. Brockbourn's death. I lay it in a great degree to *your* charge ; and, I fear, it is written and charged in God's book against you ; that very book, out of which you will be judged when you die. I say, *I* fear ; because *you* seem to have no fear for yourself. If you had any at all, I should have the less, or even none ; for your fear might lead you to repentance, and repentance, of the right kind and on the right principle, would save your soul from that dreadful ruin, which will overtake and overwhelm the giddy and thoughtless, as well as the hardened and the incorrigible sinners. Think of this, I entreat you."

During this little speech of mine she was very impatient, and she would have interrupted me in the outset, if I had not checked her by my looks and gestures ; at length then, when I gave her the opportunity, she cried out in an angry tone, "But was *I* the person that killed the woman? I think, Sir, you can have no right to say that I had any hand in her death at all. I was not near the place ; I was gone to see my friends home ; and when I came back, it was all over." "Had her husband any hand in her death, do you suppose?" I enquired. "Her husband?" she answered, "to be sure, he had. It

was he who did it, and nobody else." "Yes," I said, "he gave the death-blow, it seems, but not intending any such thing. So they settled it at his trial; do *you* think otherwise?" "No," she replied, "he was drunk himself, I believe, and mad with rage against her, so he fell to beating her with a rake, and she tumbled against something; and all these things together caused her death." "Very true," I said; "there were several circumstances which must be taken into the account if you would explain correctly how she came to lose her life. It might not have happened, if Jacob had not been drunk and passionate; it might not have happened if he had not struck her with such violence; it might not have happened, if she had not fallen upon something hard, or sharp. Each of these things therefore might justly be said to be a cause of her death, if you acquit *him* of the intention to murder her. Is not this so?" "It is plain enough," she answered; "but what has all that to do with *me*, Sir?" "Nothing, perhaps," I said; "but there may be other causes of her death besides what I have just mentioned. For instance, do you think that her husband would have treated her as he did, even supposing him to be passionate and intoxicated, if he had found her, upon *his* return, quiet in bed?" She hesitated a little, but soon she replied, "I suppose not, Sir; and I am sure it was not *me* that kept her from going to bed." "Be patient," I said, "and tell me this also; whether you suppose, that he would have touched a *hair* of her head, if she had been sitting up by herself to receive him, quite sober, and employed upon her household work, as a good wife would naturally be?" This definition of a good wife did not please her; so

she tossed her head about as before, and answered petulantly, that she could not pretend to say what a man in a drunken fury might do. "But what occasioned this fury?" I asked. "I have never heard that he brought this fury with him, but that it was stirred up by the sight of his wife's drunkenness. Would he have been in any fury at all, if he had found her, as I said, sober, and at her needle, beguiling the hours till he came? Or, if any circumstance of the day, whilst he was away from her, had fretted him, and sent him home in an ill humour, would he not have been quieted and pacified at once, and delighted too, when he saw her thus waiting in readiness to greet him, and thus employed for the benefit of them both?"

This was a new doctrine to her, both in theory and in practice, and she received it only with silent derision. To one of her equals she would most probably have replied, 'Pshaw! nonsense! What right has a husband to expect that his wife should sit moping at home, and toiling for *him* too, whilst he is abroad after his pleasures? I shall never be such a fool as *that*, depend upon it.' Thus, I think, she reasoned with herself, but she said not a word; so I continued after a very short pause. "It is undeniable then, that they who occasioned the poor woman's intoxication on that disastrous night, and kept her up to so late an hour, had a hand in her death, and were, in truth, the main causes of it. They did not indeed themselves strike the fatal blow; but they prepared her for *him* who did; they put her into that state which could not fail to stir up his anger against her, and in correcting her he killed her. Now it was at *your* house, Mrs. Hodges, that she sat



up drinking, and therefore it is no wonder that her mournful end should be charged upon *you*. It is a thing, certainly, which ought to make you serious for the rest of your life. If it does not, what will? You may think it a frolic only; but *your* frolic was death to *her*; yes, I fear both to body and soul; and, most assuredly, God will one day call you to a strict account for it, unless you change the whole course of your life. Remember, it is nothing to *me*, what becomes of you here, or hereafter; every word that I utter concerns yourself, and yourself alone."

I now permitted her to reply as she pleased. It was with great difficulty that I had prevented her again and again from interposing in her own defence; but upon the whole she appeared, when she had heard every thing, to be awed a little by the gravity and solemnity with which, as was usually the case, I expressed my own sense of the awful condition of those to whom I spoke; so she asked me, with a more moderate tone than I expected, whether I had not forgotten one material thing, which cleared her entirely from all blame; namely, that Mrs. Brockbourn was tipsy before she came to *her* house. "No," I said, "I have not forgotten it, Mrs. Hodges; and, I believe, it is perfectly true; but it does not by any means clear *you* from blame." "Why not, Sir?" she enquired hastily, and peevishly. "Because," I said, "she would, no doubt, have gone early to bed, as she did on other similar occasions, if it had not been for *your* revelling and rioting, by which she was induced to begin to drink a second time, and thus to sit up to that late hour, and to get deeper in liquor, and to lose all com-

mand over herself, and to quarrel with her husband, and irritate him to strike her with the more unguarded violence. It was from *your* revelling and rioting, you see, that all the mischief sprung." "*My* revelling and rioting, Sir?" she exclaimed with wrath; "I am sure that there was nothing of the sort in *my* house. I had but two or three friends with me, and there was my husband with us, and my father-in-law too." "I am shocked to hear it," I said; "they ought to have known better than to have encouraged you in such doings by their presence. Your husband indeed? To suffer his wife to have men and women with her, drinking and singing together, and guilty of I know not what indecencies with each other!" "Indecencies! what indecencies?" she cried, interrupting me wrathfully as before; "I am sure, neither I, nor my own friends were guilty of any. I defy you, Sir, to prove it against us. If there was one thing not so proper, it was Mrs. Brockbourn's sitting upon Mr. Hudson's lap. But he is no friend of mine, nor did I ask him to come; he came in of his own accord, very tipsy, and was determined to have his jokes. But he is only an old wag, you know, Sir; so what signifies it what he did? No harm was likely to come of it."

When I heard this, I despaired at the moment of doing any good to this young woman, who seemed to be so totally bereft of every particle of right feeling and sentiment; but I proceeded even in despair. "And did your father-in-law too," I said, "sit by, a man getting into years, and permit these things to be done under his own eyes, and even countenance them, by joining in deeds which led to the destruction of a fellow-creature? It will lie heavy upon his

conscience, when he comes to repentance, if God should allow him to repent rather than strike him down at once, as he did poor Mrs. Brockbourn, and his own wife. As for your husband, I cannot sufficiently wonder at his amazing folly. Is there indeed any husband in the world who would not guard the chastity and modesty of his wife from the corruption of such scenes as these? The little care that he has about it justifies the rumour, that you are not his wife; and I begin myself to believe it."

"Do you, Sir? Then I will soon convince you to the contrary," she replied indignantly and triumphantly. "I know very well who has told you that we were not married; but she is a backbiting slanderer, and I would not take the trouble of trying to convince *her*, for I do not care a pin's point what she thinks, or what she says of me. But I will shew *you* my register, Sir, if you will step up stairs with me; and then you will see by *that*, how false all the other reports against me are." "Very well," I said; "lead the way then, and I will follow you. I shall be glad if you can clear your character in *any* respect."

As I mentioned before, it was so bitterly cold where I stood, that I very much approved of this proposition to go up stairs, which would also give me a greater convenience for prolonging the conversation; so I hastened after her, and as she tripped before me I observed that the heels of her shoes were down, and that her stockings were hanging about them. This completes her portrait. I have already anticipated in some measure the description of her chamber above, where she had left her breakfast half-eaten. It was in the utmost state of neglect and

dirt, and contained all sorts of things, necessary and unnecessary; here was the bed unmade, there the clothes of yesterday; here the household utensils, there the eatables and drinkables; but nothing clean, no arrangement or order, all higgledy-piggledy; and the odours were scarcely more tolerable than in the room below. My compassion, however, was moved, and I said in a gentle tone, "I pity you sadly, my poor young woman, when I see in what a state you are altogether. You have had no education perhaps, or a very bad one; and therefore you know no better. If you had been well brought up, you would have understood and felt how comfortable and how creditable it is to a wife to have her house well scoured and swept continually, so as to be always neat, and sweet, and wholesome; and to have its proper place for every thing. Then, as to yourself, considering the time of the day, I should have expected to have found you at dinner rather than at breakfast; whereas, you are evidently just up, your bed yet unmade, your shoes down in the heels, your hair in curl-papers, your face not washed; in short, nothing decent or tidy about you to bespeak any sense of the duties and right behaviour of a wife. Why, even the greatest trollops, if at home at this hour, would have been busy with their needles, mending their husband's clothes, or their own, or doing something which might make home more comfortable to their husbands, and more desirable. Ah! I pity you heartily, and I fear there is something sadly to blame about you. But come, shew me the register."

During these observations, at one time she appeared to be angry, and inclined to interrupt me with some sharp retort; at another time she turned her

head aside, and had manifestly a great difficulty to restrain herself from laughter; once, however, she blushed. I remembered the saying of the poet, and should have been happy to have been able to draw the same conclusion: "*erubuit, salva res est.*" At all events, shame was not utterly extinguished, and might, perhaps, be wrought upon for her benefit.

She had now opened a small tin-box, which she took out of a table-drawer stuffed with bits of finery and gewgaws to bedizen herself withal. Here, in rare confusion, were ribbons done up in knots; beads strung upon threads, combs to fasten up her hair, buckles to clasp the sash round her waist, and plenty of trumpery besides, for which my ignorance can find no name. The register however was produced out of the box, and put into my hands with a sneer of exultation. I examined it, and saw at once that it was genuine. "Well," I said, "you are married now, without doubt; and I will tell the fact amongst your neighbours, that they may cease to look upon you as a loose, degraded woman." "Oh! never mind *them*, Sir," she cried out petulantly; "it is no matter what they may choose to think; but I was willing to satisfy you that all is right." "I hope it is, now," I said; "but what is to become of the past? For I will not conceal from you what I have heard; namely, that you had two children before your marriage." "Two children before my marriage, Sir?" she exclaimed indignantly. "No, Sir, I never had any child before my marriage. This is one of Mrs. Hudson's slanders. Why, Sir, she had herself three children before she was married; so she had better not throw stones at others." "Be patient," I said; "you are mistaken about Mrs. Hudson; she never

mentioned any such thing to me at all ; she only agreed with many more in telling me, that they knew nothing about you ; either who you were, or from whence you came, except that you used to be here on Sundays ; and I fear your being here on Sundays was for the purpose of such drunken revels as caused poor Mrs. Brockbourn's death. But, pray, keep your temper, if you can, (she was ready to burst with rage,) and answer me this ; had you not a little unhappy child that died some weeks ago ?" " I had, Sir," she replied hastily and flippantly ; " but what of *that* ? He was not born till after I was married." " Possibly not," I said ; " but how soon after your marriage ?" She pretended to calculate ; so I continued, " Oh ! do not trouble yourself to reckon up the exact time. I see enough by this register ; the poor infant must have come into the world very shortly after you were married, and consequently he must have sprung from sin and wickedness. And what else was he likely to see with such a mother but sin and wickedness, if his life had been spared ! God, therefore, in his great mercy, has taken him away from you, to heaven, I trust, and you will never see him again, if you go on thus."

I paused here, but she was speechless ; touched, perhaps, a little, with the recollection of her child, and abashed and awed into silence by the terrible idea which I presented to her imagination. I followed up the blow in this manner—" I too, Mrs. Hodges, have committed children of my own to the grave, and my consolation was, that I might meet them again in heaven to be separated no more ; and especially, whilst the mournful event of losing them was fresh in my mind, I was full of good resolutions, and

my heart burned within me, to endeavour to qualify myself for the same abode of everlasting joy. Are you a mother, and do not long to regain your child? He cost you many a pang when you brought him forth; did you part from him without a single one? Have you thought no more about him, where he is gone, and whether you yourself will go to the same place, and rejoin him there, and resume, with no further fears of change, the caresses and endearments which were cut short in this evil world? Alas! alas! if this be so, how fearful are the habits of vice, and the corruptions of bad companions, and the calamity of not being educated in the knowledge of God and religion, that they should stifle all the natural feelings and love of a mother towards her own offspring, and all the best desires of our hearts, with respect to the being happy for ever in the world which is to come!"

By this little speech another step appeared to be gained; she was evidently still more abashed, and awed, at least; and perhaps she began to suspect, that all was not so right about herself as she had been too willing to imagine, debased as she was by her own vices and by the vicious examples of her friends. However, she interposed here, and seemingly with a very different spirit, but without shedding a single tear, "Indeed, Sir, you have got a wrong opinion of me. These people are very wicked; you ought not to believe them. There is but one person anything like good amongst them, and that is Mrs. Martin; ask *her* about me, Sir, and I am sure she will give you a better account of me. Besides, Sir, I am not so ignorant as you suppose; I was at a charity-school for many years, and learnt every thing that was taught there, and went regularly to church

both morning and afternoon ; so I cannot be the wretched sort of woman whom you describe." " You ought not to be so, certainly," I said, " if *that* be the case ; but I must remind you of one thing, which requires your most serious consideration ; that those very advantages will be the cause of a heavier punishment hereafter, if you do not make a proper use of them. And that you have not hitherto done so is too true, and quite undeniable. Your virtue and innocence you have thrown away to gratify your craving lust ; *that* is clear. You drink, yourself, to intoxication ; and you get drunken women for your companions ; and to one of them a terrible death has been the consequence ; terrible to *her*, and terrible to *you* too, be assured of it." Here she interrupted me, and said, that Mrs. Brockbourn was no friend of hers ; and that, if she had refused to let her in, she would have smashed all her windows in a moment ; so ungovernable was her temper. " Did you ever know her to have done this to anybody ? " I asked coolly. " No," she answered ; " I cannot say that I do ; but I am sure that she would have done it to me that night, if I had shut my door against her." " You cannot be sure," I said, " of any such thing ; as it was not her habit, it seems, to break people's windows : but, if you had been quite sure, it would not excuse you. No, no ! your name, I fear, will always be coupled with this horrible deed ; the death of Mrs. Brockbourn, and the drinking at *your* house will always go together in the recollections of us all, and what is worse, in the judgments of God, unless you repent."

" Well, Sir," she said, resuming somewhat of her former petulance, " in spite of all this, I see no



reason to accuse myself on that score. Why, Sir, the same thing might have happened when her husband beat her the Sunday before; it might have happened after she had been drinking at Mrs. Harwich's, or Mrs. Costar's; it might have happened when she staid out with a man all night under yonder hedge; (she pointed to a hedge at a distance;) it might have happened upon any of these occasions as well as after she had been at *my* house; therefore I am not to blame; I am quite easy about it." "And would the man, her paramour, have been quite easy in his conscience," I asked solemnly, "if she had lost her life in consequence of her adultery with *him*? If she had gone up to judgment, straight from his foul embraces; would the adulterer himself, do you think; have pleaded that he was not to blame, because her death might have happened after being at Mrs. Harwich's, or Mrs. Costar's, or Mrs. Hodges's? On the contrary, would he not have carried with him to his dying-day a sting in his bosom, worse than the bite of a scorpion, which would have kept him in perpetual pain and anguish; the sad earnest and foretaste of the weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, the undying worm, and the unquenchable fire, that are to be hereafter?"

Strong figures and vivid descriptions alone had power to touch the seared heart of *her* to whom I spoke, although so young. She knew what these meant, from having read her Bible at school; but she seemed never to have thought of them since, until I now brought them back forcibly to her mind, and stirred up her fears, perhaps, lest she might suffer the realities herself. I fancied that I saw dismay and terror beginning to seize upon her, and I con-

tinued thus without delay. "Tell me not, as an excuse for yourself, that neither Mrs. Harwich, nor Mrs. Costar would have cared, if Mrs. Brockbourn's death had followed a revelling at *their* houses. Will *you* be satisfied to have the hardened feelings of those profligate women? Does it do credit to your heart, that you can enter this chamber, and look around it, and sit in it, and sleep in it, without any compunction at all; without saying to yourself, in deep sorrow, 'Here the poor, thoughtless creature sat, in this room of mine, lifted up to the skies, as it were, by the unnatural spirits which intoxication had created, pouring down, to her destruction, still more of the poisoning liquor which *I* had provided for her; here she sat, singing lewd and filthy songs, which *I* encouraged by clapping my hands, and joining in the shouts of approbation; here she sat, ay, perhaps, on this very chair,' I said, striking one with my cane, 'she, a wife, and consecrated to her husband alone, with another man, a would-be-adulterer, heated by drink and lust, on her lap; here she sat, and *I* looked on, and made my sport of it, and shook myself with laughter; foolish, unthinking, wicked being as *I* was! For, ah! in half an hour, how horribly was the scene changed! She was weltering in her own blood! She went from *me*, from her cups, from her songs, from her immodesties, to die! To be murdered! by her own husband! And to go from thence straight to judgment before the offended, Almighty God! I saw her, disfigured with wounds, writhing with agony, raving with delirium, and now and then crying to heaven for mercy! Surely this is a warning for *me*! Surely, this might have been *my* case if a gracious God had not spared me! For what? Doubtless, to

repent and return to *him*; and, whilst I live here, this room and this chair shall remind me of God's anger and my own danger, and quicken my repentance, and hasten my return to piety and virtue."

I stopped here to collect myself a little, and to think where I was; deeply affected too myself, and hoping that, if I had not touched the heart of this young woman, I had at least awakened her fears, and set them more powerfully to work. Not a single tear, however, did she yet shed, but she grew pale and trembled, and dropped all further defence of herself. After pausing for awhile, therefore, I said with a gentler tone, "If you had reasoned in this manner, Mrs. Hodges, it would have been creditable to yourself, and pleasing to God; but it would have been no more than what I should have expected, from one, who had unfortunately gone astray, and was now so strikingly admonished, after having been brought up, in her earlier days, to read the Bible, and to worship God in his own holy church." "Yes, Sir," she cried, interrupting me with energy, "and I will go to church again; Mrs. Martin will take me with her I know." "*That* she will," I said, joyfully, "and I will mention it to her this instant; and be assured, that if you keep your good resolutions, you will have *me* for your friend, and God too, which is far better." So I left her, and rejoined my children; and when I had explained my wishes to Mrs. Martin, and related as much of the conversation as I thought necessary for her guidance, I retraced my steps homewards, elevated a little with hope, and thankful for this discharge of my duty, which began so untowardly, but now looked so fair and promising.

The next morning brought the elder Hodges to the

rectory. "I am glad to see you," I said, when I came to him in the hall; "I have been enquiring after you several times in vain. I wished to talk to you about this unhappy business, in which it grieves me to hear that you have had your share." "Yes, Sir," he answered; "I understand from my neighbour, Mrs. Martin, that you accuse me of sitting and drinking with the woman just before she was killed. But it is not true, Sir, I assure you; I was not in the house of my son that night at all." "How is *that*?" I asked with a tone of surprise. "It was told me by your own daughter-in-law, who could not so soon have forgotten the persons that were there, especially *you*, I should think. Besides, she attempted to justify herself from all blame, on the very ground that an elderly man like yourself, being also her father-in-law, was one of the company at her house." "It does not signify, Sir," he replied; "I declare again to you, as God is my judge, I was not amongst them. They were very merry, Sir, and a great many folks came up to see what they were about, and there was a constant going in and out of one or another; so she might easily be mistaken. But I will tell you exactly how it was, Sir, so far as I was concerned. I came home later than usual from my work, and tired almost to death; so I would have been glad to have gone to bed at once: but hearing their songs and their jollity, Sir, I went like the rest to enquire after it. However, I did not pass the threshold, if you will believe me. They would have had me to join them, but I refused; so I drank one glass of gin at the door, and then left them." "They were very tipsy; were they not?" I asked. "Why, to be sure, Sir," he answered, "they were merry enough, and

were at high romps with one another." "But how did it begin, and how did they get so much liquor?" I enquired. "Oh! Sir," he replied, "one of the women brought some spirits with her, and when the bottle was out they were threepence a-piece to get more, and every fresh comer paid down something; and so they went on, Sir, filling the bottle again and again as fast as it was emptied; and the lad from the new gin-shop in the village was continually running to and fro between the shop and *them* to supply all their calls. This was the way, Sir, in which they managed it." "And did not you think it necessary to interfere," I asked, "and to exercise the authority of a father, in putting a stop to this drunken revel?" "Me, Sir! no, indeed, not I," he answered quickly and vehemently: "I should soon have had my eyes scratched out for my pains." "Ay, indeed?" I said: "Pray, who were these women, so depraved, and so violent, that even *you*, a man, the father-in-law of one of them, and beginning to grow grey with years, should be afraid to tell them of their unrighteous deeds, and to warn them that they were disgracing themselves, and provoking the vengeance of Almighty God? And now you have seen, by the dreadful event, that your remonstrances and warnings would not have been vain and empty words. They would have been followed at once by a terrible judgment upon one of the guilty. But perhaps God would have blessed your courage, if you had spoken to them, as one of *your* age might well have been expected to do. They might have listened to your godly counsel, and have asked God to forgive them, and thus have turned his wrath aside. By a well-timed reproof you might have been the happy instru-

ment of saving a fellow-creature from a horrible death, which may perhaps have plunged her into a more horrible eternity. But you were a wretched coward, and so you lost the opportunity of performing a good deed, which might have been imputed to you hereafter in the judgment-day. The thought, I rather suspect, never once came into your head. No, they bribed you with their liquor to hold your tongue. One glass was enough to blind your eyes. It is a sad thing for you, Hodges. Without any doubt, you are guilty before God, and he will call you to an account for no small share in this murderous deed."

Hodges was now like the "galled jade, with her withers wrung." He was not capable of understanding, or feeling, that he was chargeable in the degree that I represented him to be ; but his conscience was not quite asleep, and smote him, I do not doubt, with respect to this particular action ; and, being now awakened, smote him much more with respect to the rest of his life, which was stained with too many sins. But it was plain, by his countenance and his gestures, that he was irritated by the lashes which I had given him, as well as stirred in his breast by the witness that still was lodging there. So I said in a conciliatory tone, " My good friend, how far is the cluster from this rectory-house of mine ?" " Why, Sir," he answered, " it is pretty near upon two miles, I think." This question appeared to restore him to his serenity ; for he fancied, no doubt, that I had now done with the other subject which was so painful to him. " And what has been of late the state of the weather, and the roads ?" I asked. " As bad as bad can be," he replied immediately ; " so that I have often wondered how you got there, Sir, when I have been told of your

visits." "But had not I good reason," I said, "to despise bad weather, and bad roads too, when I had the prospect of so much gain before me; fees, and offerings, and tithes." At first he stared excessively at this, and afterwards he replied, grinning and scratching his head, "If you get anything there, Sir, I don't know who pays it; I am sure it is not *me*." "Perhaps I have left money amongst *you*," I said, "instead of bringing any away with me from *you*." "Why, yes, Sir," he answered; "so I hear. Some folks have contrived to make a good job of it, if reports be true." "Well," I said, "and what of *you* yourself, Hodges? You have not forgotten, I suppose, the unlucky quarrel and fight that you had a few years ago, and your being committed to prison in consequence of it: and who it was that often relieved the distress of your poor wife, now dead, and of your children, then too young to earn their own living?" "*You* did it, Sir," he replied with vivacity and feeling. "No, Sir, I have not forgotten it; and God bless you for it! Ay, indeed, those were bad times for *us*!" "But do you remember another thing also?" I said. "When you came to thank me, what sort of thanks did I tell you would please me most?" "Why, yes, Sir," he answered, "I remember *that* too as well as if it was but yesterday; it seemed so odd; excuse my freedom, Sir! I am a plain-spoken man; I let out what is uppermost in my mind, straight forward." "Well, but what was it?" I asked. "Why, Sir," he replied, "you said, that if I would but try to save my own soul, *that* would content you most, and was the only way in which you wished me to shew my gratitude. To be sure, I thought you would have desired me to draw

you some turf or gravel for your garden, which would have cost me something in time and labour, and might have thus repaid you your money ; so I marked it the more, when you only bade me look to my soul, if I desired to please you."

"Well," I said ; "and do you think that I had any particular reason for being anxious about the safety of *your* soul more than the souls of others ?" He hesitated a little, as if he was considering the matter, and then he answered, "No, Sir, I know of none." "It is very true," I said ; "so perhaps you may think now, upon more and better reflection, that if it would give me pleasure to persuade *you* to attend to the care of your soul, it would also give me pleasure to persuade others to do the same ; and that I should have a great deal of pleasure, if I could persuade a great many." "Why, it looks like it, to be sure, Sir," he replied. "Possibly then," I said, "you can now sufficiently account for my frequent visits to the cluster, in spite of the battering rain, and my being often over my shoe-tops in the mud ? Are there not plenty of souls there to be saved ; and souls too in imminent danger of being lost for ever ?"

A shade of trouble now passed over his brow, and darkened it for awhile, as if he feared that I was coming back to the old terrific subject ; so he made me no answer. I resumed as if he had answered in the affirmative. "Now tell me this then," I said, "which are most concerned in this business ? They who have the souls to be saved, or he who comes and tries to persuade them to look after their souls ? In short, to speak simply, *they* or *I* ?" "The case is plain enough, Sir," he replied ; "nobody can be so much concerned as they are, and I do not see how



*you* are concerned at all in the matter. I know of nothing that you can get for yourself by it." "And can anything," I said, "be of greater concern to *them* than how to save their souls from everlasting fire?" "Nothing in all the world, to be sure, Sir," he answered. "Would it not be strange then," I said, "if they should be angry with me, and abuse me, and call me ill names; and still more, if they should curse me; when, without any prospect of worldly good for myself, I try to teach *them* to obtain the greatest good, beyond all comparison, both in this world and in the next?"

His conscience evidently bore testimony against him; but he replied, "Whoever should do this, Sir, it would be very wrong of him indeed, and very unthankful." "But do people love," I said, "to be told of their faults: the drunkard of his drunkenness, the fornicator of his fornications, the thief of his robberies?" "Why, no, Sir," he answered, "I cannot say that they do." "But," I said, "it is necessary, I presume, that they *should* be told of them, and more especially if they seem not to regard them themselves, and go on as if they would perish in them?" "It is true enough, Sir," he answered. "Then what do you think of *him*," I said, "who has the courage to do this, with no other object in view, as far as *you* can see, than the good of those, whom he takes to task for their sins or follies, and who is, besides, often calumniated and cursed for what he does? If *you*, a father, were to reason and remonstrate with your own children, when you observe them going astray, the people would say of you, that you had cause enough for doing it; that their good conduct would be creditable to you; and their bad conduct

disgraceful ; that you could not possibly be happy whilst they were living under your eyes in vice and profligacy ; and that their young families, being left without bread, might ultimately fall upon *you* for their maintenance. Nor is it likely, I should hope, that your children themselves would blame you for such an interference, either with an undutiful sharpness, or at all. But I am both blamed, and hated too, as you know very well, by many of these thoughtless people, who are rushing to their own destruction ; yes, and they write my name on the walls with some reproachful addition to it, and I believe also, that a few of them even heap the most shocking imprecations upon me, when my back is turned ; yet I persevere, nevertheless, undaunted and unwearied, in the same course of exhorting and reproving you all, when I think it necessary ; whereas, if I acted differently, that is, if I suffered you to perish without an effort to save you, I should be the most popular man alive ; you would all praise me up to the heavens ; nay, you would almost worship and adore me. Now then, after weighing all this in your mind, I ask you to tell me, whether I have not a great love for your souls ; or what else it can be which makes me scorn my own ease, and quiet, and popularity, and expose myself to your blame, your hate, your abuse, and even your curses ? Consider, and answer me."

He would have interrupted me, if I would have let him, two or three times during this speech ; but I promised myself a very good effect from making such a statement as I did therein ; so I would not be diverted from finishing the idea which had occurred to me, and it seemed certainly to succeed most admirably. When I stopped at length of my own ac-

cord, he replied with warmth, "We know it, Sir; we know it, I assure you, well enough; and you are under a mistake, Sir, in supposing that you are thought of, or treated, so ill. There may be one or two, here and there, who had rather that you did not meddle with them, and who find fault with you when you do it; but *that* is not the case with the most of us; we like our parson, and will stand up for him; we must shut our eyes wilfully, not to see that you are working for our good, and that you work very hard besides." "Very well then," I said, "if you would not only hear me, but do what I bid you, which you acknowledge to be for your good, *that* would be a noble reward to me for my labours. However, I will confess the truth to you, Hodges; I have something else in view of very great consequence to me. At the terrible day of judgment I shall have an account to give as well as *you*, and others. I am placed here as a sort of steward for the management of God's affairs, and he will reckon with me for my stewardship at the last. But the things committed to me are infinitely more valuable than money, lands, or goods; namely, *your souls*. And for all that I may save, God will graciously make me his creditor; but for all that are lost I shall be put down on the other side of the book as his debtor; that is, if they are lost through my negligence, and in consequence of my not instructing, or warning them. Now then, Hodges, if you understand this, as I think you must do, you will see clearly, that, if I did not love your souls by my natural temper, and if the mighty danger of such precious things did not stir up my pity and compassion; yet a necessity is laid upon me to watch and labour for their benefit; a necessity,

which it would be tremendous for me to disregard; for you know how such a being as God can punish. This is the whole of the case, Hodges; and if you ever wondered before, you will wonder no longer, that I *meddle* with you, as I do, and interfere with your vicious practices, and try to open your eyes to see what is right, against your own wills, with much thankless trouble, with much evil report, and sometimes with personal danger."

"Thank you! Sir," he replied at once when I stopped, "thank you! Sir, again, for explaining this matter to me; but I wonder still, that you have not been tired out long ago." "Are parents ever tired of doing what they can for the good of their children?" I asked. "Why some, Sir, are not," he answered; "and perhaps none of us ought to be." "Then," I said, "consider *me*, if you please, as the parent of you all, and yourselves as my children; and consider me as one of those parents, who not only ought not to be tired, but who never *are* tired with working for their children's good, however perverse and ungrateful the children themselves may be. But then you must bear with *me*, as children are bound by nature and God's law to bear with their parents, whenever their parents may see fit to admonish, to reprove, or to correct them." "It ought to be so, Sir, to be sure," he replied. "Well but, Hodges," I said, "you do not act up to your own rule yourself; for I am very much mistaken, if you were not exceedingly angry with me a minute or two ago." "Why, Sir," he answered sharply, "you accused me when I was innocent; *that* you did, Sir." "Ay, ay," I said, "there is the evil! People think themselves innocent when they are guilty. If you had

been better brought up in your youth ; if you had been in the habits of reading your Bible at home, and coming to church to hear it read there ; if you had lived with pious and virtuous companions ; you would have seen your own conduct in a different light ; and God, you may be sure, who cannot be blinded by any false disguises, will see it, as it really is, in its true light. He will make a difference indeed between ignorance which is wilful, and ignorance which cannot be helped ; but I am quite sure, that he will consider much of *your* ignorance as entirely your own voluntary fault ; because, at all events, it has always been in your power to come for instruction to church, and I myself have frequently reminded you of that duty. However, in this particular circumstance, I cannot bring myself to believe that you *can* be so ignorant, whether instructed or uninstructed, as not to perceive, that a company of young women, of whom your own daughter-in-law was one, drinking spirits together till they were intoxicated, and singing so loud as to attract the notice of the whole neighbourhood, ought to have been checked and reprimanded by *you* ; whereas, on the very contrary, without a single word to show that you disapproved of so disgraceful, so disgusting, so sinful, so profligate a transaction, you absolutely drank yourself some of the maddening liquor which they presented to you ; and thus, by doing it, you countenanced their wicked deeds ; you encouraged them to go on ; you did just the same as if you had said, ‘ You are all in the right ; I am glad to see you so merry, and happy ; and nothing else grieves me, but that I am so tired with my day’s work, that I cannot stay to make myself as great a fool, as great a

beast, and as great a sinner, as the very worst amongst you. This is all my trouble; I have no other."

Thus I ran on, and he appeared to be uneasy enough; but as he had disarmed himself by his former concessions, he only scraped on the floor, and twirled his hat round in his two hands, without attempting to speak a single word. Whilst I was speculating upon his probable feelings, an idea suddenly came into my head, that I might perhaps make a deeper impression upon him by another mode of attack; so I said solemnly, "Ah! Mr. Hodges, when you opened the door of the room in which they were drinking and singing, and looked in amongst them, if you could but have foreseen the mournful consequences of their ungodly mirth, you would have sickened to the very heart, and you would have spurned with abhorrence the cup which they offered you. At that instant, if your eyes had been opened by some gracious act of God's providence, you would have seen death, in some terrible figure, hovering over their heads, with his fatal dart prepared to strike, and you would have started back with affright and horror, and would have cried out aloud to them all, to desist from their sinful doings, and to escape for their lives, if it were not too late. And perhaps you might have beheld in death's train a troop of still more horrible beings, let loose from hell itself, whose names you do not fear to pronounce, and whose vengeance you do not hesitate to invoke, in your furious passions against each other; you might have beheld them ready to seize those whom death should smite, and eager to execute upon them their own devilish rage, as well as the fierce wrath of God. What

would have been the effect of such a sight as this ! But you saw it not, or you would not have dared to taste, or to touch, the poisoned cup. Yet you *might* have seen it with the eye of faith ; for death was indeed abroad amongst you, and one mangled corpse in a few hours betrayed his presence, and his work. The evil spirits of darkness and damnation too were with him ; but, oh ! may the mercy of God, purchased for us all by our Redeemer's cross, have thrown a shield between *them*, and the soul which they came to destroy !”

The man was awe-struck with my description, and with the dreadful thought, no doubt, which my devout prayer had caused to flash across his mind. Nor was I myself unmoved ; and I would gladly have dismissed him now with this sting in his conscience, only that there were other things which we had left behind us, and which I was desirous to recall, and discuss. So, after pausing long enough to allow the last idea to dwell effectually, if possible, upon his imagination, I resumed, and said, “ But you have not told me yet, who these women are, that were so bent on their own destruction, as to set all shame and fear at naught ; and whom, if you had been disposed, you would not have dared to warn. I must know their names, that I at least may warn them ; for in the exercise of his office there is nothing which the minister of God dares not do.” “ Oh ! Sir,” he replied at once, “ I will tell you without scruple. They are all pretty well known everywhere. There was such an one, and such an one, and such an one,” (I conceal their names because I exclude them from my history,) “ and there was Mrs. Costar, Sir.” “ Mrs. Costar !” I exclaimed with amaze-

ment. "Mrs. Costar, do you say? Do not my ears deceive me? Can it be possible?" "Yes, Sir," he answered coolly, "it is possible, and true too; and whenever you heard of any drinking bout in our quarter, you may be sure that she was the ringleader of it." "Well," I said, lifting up my hands with terror as well as astonishment, "the poor woman is mad certainly. God has punished her with the loss of her reason, and so she plunges deeper and deeper into the same sin; and she will undoubtedly be destroyed, body and soul, hereafter, whatever may become of her here, unless she repents. Have you heard that I met her, deeply intoxicated, on the high-road, one Sabbath-day, shortly after Mrs. Brockbourn's death?" "Yes, Sir," he replied, "I have heard it, to be sure." "Well," I said, "and what do you think of it, Hodges? Was this a case in which it was my duty to meddle, or not?" "To be sure it was, Sir," he answered decisively; "but whether she will be the better for it, I cannot pretend to tell. If she will be ruled by anybody, she will be ruled by *you*." "Very well," I said, "I *have* interfered; I have spoken to her at great length; but, unfortunately, I did not then know that she was one of the wretched, thoughtless drunkards, who brought Mrs. Brockbourn to her untimely and miserable end. However, her own conscience, no doubt, reminded her of it constantly, as I went on talking to her; and I will tell you one thing, Hodges, that if she is not the better for what I said to her, she will in God's eye be much the worse. He will not suffer her to neglect such a warning, you may depend upon it, without inflicting upon her a double punishment. And it will be the same with all others who despise



the admonitions of those whom God hath set over them ; they will be doubly guilty in his sight. As to Mrs. Costar, however, she was deeply affected with my remonstrances, and I hope she has listened to them. Have you seen or heard of her being intoxicated within the last fortnight ?" " I cannot say that I have, Sir," he replied. " I am truly glad of it," I rejoined ; " for, if it had happened, you would, most likely, have known it. God grant that she may persevere to the end in her new course of life !" " I wish she may, Sir," he said ; " but her neighbour, old Mrs. South, will never mend, I think. Why, Sir, you gave her a shilling yesterday when you passed this way, and in the evening one of my sons found her in a ditch. She had spent your money, all in liquor." " She promised me, even with tears in her eyes, to spend it otherwise," I said ; " but I desire you to note down in your memory, for your own improvement, that wicked habits are seldom, if ever, conquered and laid aside in old age. The thing cannot be done without an extraordinary measure of God's grace, and it is not to be expected that God should bestow it, to save *you*, whether you will, or not, just at the close of life. Make haste, therefore, Mr. Hodges, make all the haste in your power to keep God's commandments ; and then his ordinary grace will be sufficient for you."

Hodges seemed to be embarrassed with this unexpected admonition, and not to know to what part of his conduct I intended it to apply ; but he did not ask me to explain my meaning, because, I suppose, he was afraid, lest I might bring to the light, and discuss, and expose what he would rather conceal even from himself. So I continued thus—" I must

not hide from you, Mr. Hodges, what I hear commonly said, that your neighbourhood has become much worse since *you* and your family came to reside there." Upon this he restrained himself with difficulty; and when I looked at him significantly, he exclaimed, "I am not angry with *you*, Sir, but with those who speak falsely of me." "Well, well," I said, "it is better not to be angry with anybody; and we ought to thank even our enemies, if they should be the causes of our improvement, although unintentionally. Our enemies speak of us maliciously, without doubt; but still there will very often be some truth in their malicious speeches; and if we are wise enough to take ourselves to task, and to search to the bottom till we find it out, and then to correct the fault, we shall disappoint their malice by converting it to our own profit."

He was not alive to this excellent sentiment which I had pressed into my service from some noble Pagan of old; so I said plainly; "Your habit of swearing, Hodges, is remarked by everybody who has any dealings with you, and all who have the fear of God before their eyes shudder to hear you cursing and damning, as you do, not only others, but every limb of your own body, and what is enough to make one's hair stand on end, even your precious soul, which you thus doom to everlasting misery; and mark! your poor crippled son has caught this horrible habit from *you*, his father; so that you will one day have to answer for *his* soul, as well as for your own."

He was confounded and dismayed, and did not seem disposed, or able to say anything; so I continued—"Now I ask you, Hodges, whether you are taking, or have taken already, any steps towards the

getting rid of this habit?" "I have indeed, Sir," he answered with all the earnestness of sincerity, "and I am doing every day the best that I can; and what is more, Sir, I am sure that I do not swear now so much as I was used to do; and my son too is improved." "I hope you do not deceive yourself," I said, "in what you tell me. We are too apt to be partial in judging our own conduct, whereas we cannot be too severe. In short, the more severe we are against ourselves, the less severe will God be against us. Oh! Hodges, the habit of swearing is most odious, most brutal, and most offensive to God; perhaps, yes, certainly more so than drunkenness itself; and why therefore he should spare *you*, when he snatched away Mrs. Brockbourn by a sudden stroke, and brought Mr. White to the grave by lingering torments, and after being forced by those torments to give up his body to the surgeons to cut and saw at their will, I am unable to explain. But it becomes *you* to seize upon the opportunity of his mercy with all speed, and with a pious, heartfelt gratitude. Where would you have been now, if he had struck you with the thunderbolt of his wrath in the very midst of some blasphemous speech? If you go on in the same course, your happiest lot will be to die by inches, that pain and time may give you the chance of appeasing him, before you are swallowed up in eternity."

I stopped to see if he would say anything, but he only shuddered in silence; so I proceeded. "That unhappy son of yours, I must remind you besides, has another grievous sin to lament and correct; and your own conscience will tell you whether he derives it from *you* or not." "What is *that*, Sir?" he in-

quired eagerly. "It is lying," I said; "and I know it partly by my own observation. A short time ago I charged him with the crime of cursing and swearing; and he did not hesitate a single instant to deny the thing entirely; and since then my children told me almost with tears that they saw him beating his poor little ass in a brutal manner. Well, I charged him with this too, and he denied it at once and as firmly as he had done his blasphemies." "Why, Sir," he answered, "the poor lad has but half sense, and so he is the less to blame." "His half sense," I said, "will not excuse so much wickedness either to himself, or to *you*. Look to it, I admonish you. He has a soul to save as well as the wisest amongst us; and if he had but one single grain of sense, it might be turned to a good purpose. Are you content that he should be a swearer, a liar, and a brute, and so perish for ever, because he is but half-witted, and a miserable cripple? These are circumstances which stir the compassion of everybody else; and do they stir none in his own father?"

Again he was reduced to silence, and duties were made known to him, about which he had never even dreamed before, and yet now, without doubt, he saw the obligation of them at once, and trembled for his inattention to them. I questioned him only on one point more. "Your married son," I said, "how came *he* to suffer such doings in his own house; nay, to join in them?" "Why, Sir," he replied, "he is very industrious, and very sober; but he is young and of an easy temper, and readily led by anybody; and so his wife, and the rest of them, soon wheedled him into their merry-making. At first, Sir, when he went in from his work and saw what they had been

about, he was hurt at it; but they began to coax him, and to say, 'Come, Jack, you are a good-humoured fellow; you must not be angry; here is a glass for you to comfort you, before you go to bed. It will do you good, man, after your labour; you will sleep the better for it to-night, and work the better for it to-morrow.' This was the way, Sir, in which they drew him in; and how could he be expected to stand out against so much pressing? But, I think, he will be wiser and firmer in future, Sir." "I hope so, indeed," I said; and, after a few more words, being wanted by some other visitors, I dismissed him.

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§ 6.—*Jacob Brockbourn.*

IN the evening of the same day, when I was sitting in my book-room, with Mrs. Warton and all my children about me, a servant, not acquainted with the man or his history, announced the arrival of one Jacob Brockbourn, who was desirous of speaking with me. Every game was abandoned in the twinkling of an eye, and up they jumped in confusion from their seats; and some turned pale, and some exclaimed, "*That* is the murderer! He is come at last! What will you do now, papa?" I was seized with a little cold shivering myself; but I answered immediately, "Why, I will go and speak to him, to be sure; have not I been long wishing for such an opportunity?" So I ordered the servant to bring him into the hall; and when I moved to the door, every eye was directed towards me with a mixture of

apprehension and painful curiosity. Even Mrs. Warton herself was not without a slight agitation. The idea, I believe, still clung to us all, that the man was a murderer ; and to talk with a murderer was terrific to the imagination. However, I went, but with a palpitating heart ; and I commanded that none should follow me. I silently prayed, meanwhile, for a prosperous issue to this uncommon and interesting adventure.

Here, then, at length, having brought the great personage of my drama on the stage, I sweep off all the rest to make room for *him*. There have been many acts in this piece ; and great variety of character and scenery, I think, although all in low life, has been faithfully delineated in it, except so far as regards words and expressions, which I seldom remember with accuracy, and which, if I remembered them ever so well, would be totally unfit to be recorded in a work of this kind. The last act of the piece is reserved for Jacob Brockbourn alone ; with *him* I close my warnings. Not that I did not speak to many others, both before and afterwards, in consequence of the fatal occurrence of Mrs. Brockbourn's death, and to some of the same persons again and again ; but I have perhaps been tedious already, and it is probable that I should be doubly so, if I were to resume a new series of similar conversations after this interview with the most important personage of all. Here, therefore, the whole history will terminate.

There was a staircase in the hall, and a lamp was burning there, suspended in the middle of it. It was by the light of this lamp that I caught the first view of Jacob Brockbourn's figure. He was a man,

neither tall, nor large in any way, but stoutly and compactly built. His dress was a loose jacket and trowsers with a silk handkerchief round his neck. He was leaning against the staircase, and his eyes were fixed upon the floor; this attitude and posture gave me at once a strong notion of his present depression and humility. It was no doubt an arduous trial, for a man, under such circumstances, to come to one of God's ministers, to be questioned about a dreadful deed which had brought his life into jeopardy; and he evidently felt the peculiar situation in which he was placed. So he neither stood boldly upright, without seeking for, or betraying any want of support, nor did he carry his eyes around to gain the earliest intelligence of my approach, or to conjecture, from the turn of my countenance, with what probable sentiments I might address him. Nor did the sound of my footsteps disturb his position, or occasion him to alter it in the least. Until I came quite close to him, and actually spoke, he still leant against the banisters, and still kept his eyes fixed on the ground. The lamp now illumined his features, and I saw them distinctly; they were hard, and very dark and gloomy; fit emblems of a mind like that which his step-daughter had described to me, severe, reserved, and morose. His complexion, black enough by nature, was made, as it seemed, more dismally black by the inward workings of such a mind, or by the sad recollections which preyed upon it. 'This man,' I said to myself, 'is capable of having harboured in his breast the thought of that murder which has been imputed to him; but God, and his own conscience, not I, must judge him.'

It was now high time for me to awaken him from

his apparent stupor ; so I began with telling him in a gentle tone that I was much pleased with his coming to me. Upon this he raised himself from the banisters, and his eyes met mine ; but in a moment he turned them aside from me. However, he answered me with great propriety ; in a manner indeed which was very remarkable for a person whom I supposed to have been quite uneducated ; and he explained, nearly in the way already related, the circumstances which had prevented him from paying an earlier attention to my commands. "Are you now entirely at liberty," I enquired, "and disposed, besides, to stay here with me for half an hour, or even more, if our conversation should seem to make it necessary, or advisable?" "As long as you please, Sir," he replied. "I came on purpose to be at your service, and I have nothing else to do." "Very well, then," I said ; "if that be the case, follow me this way."

I had a candle in my hand, which I put down upon a table, when I had led him into the nearest room, and had closed the door after us ; and then we remained standing from the beginning to the end of the interview ; for I felt a very strong repugnance against asking him to sit in the first instance, and the thing itself never occurred to me afterwards. "Brockbourn," I now said, "we are here alone together, and we may talk with perfect freedom. Let me ask you first, whether you are clearly convinced in your own mind, that my wish to see you, and to talk with you, proceeds entirely from my thinking that I may have the power to do you a great service ; and, in short, that I have no good of my own, but only *your* good, in view?" "I am quite certain of it, Sir," he answered, "and I am very much obliged to you." "But then,"



I said, "when one person talks with another person in order to be useful to him, it may be necessary (may it not?) to bring out a variety of things; some pleasant and some unpleasant; some gentle, and some severe: in short, of many sorts and kinds?" He hesitated: so I asked him, if he thought, that all men might be profited by the same way of talking; or, whether it might not be proper to praise, to encourage, to blame, to check, to reprove, to threaten, according to the different tempers and circumstances of those with whom we talked, and whose benefit we had in view? "I understand you, Sir," he replied; "and it is very true." "Well," I said, "and the person, wishing to do good, must be left entirely to himself, (must he not?) to choose his own method of talking, according to what he knows, or supposes to be the condition of the other with whom he talks?" "To be sure, he must, Sir," was his answer. "And that other," I said, "would be very wrong, (would he not?) if he were angry, or found fault, when the sole object is his own good?" "He would, Sir, indeed," he replied. "So that," I said, "if he were to be wounded and cut to the quick by the sharp and severe things that were spoken to him, still, if he reflected rightly, he would reason himself into the belief, that it was his duty to bear them patiently, and even thankfully; because, in fact, the sharpness and severity of the things spoken might cause them to be so much the more profitable, and might be the strongest possible proof of the real kindness and friendship of *him* who spoke them." "This is all very just, and very good, Sir," he answered; and such a mode of talking being quite a novelty to him, he looked erect, and seemed to be roused and interested by it, and for the time to forget his own melancholy circumstances.

This foundation then being now laid, I said, "Such is the situation of *me* and *you*, Brockbourn. We are about to talk for *your* good, and not for mine, upon a very painful subject; and if this subject should seem to require, that I should say anything harsh or bitter which might hurt your feelings, you will thoroughly understand why I say it. But, I hope and believe, it will not be necessary for me to do anything else except to comfort you, and to point out the duties which are most necessary to be attended to by one who has done what *you* have done, and who has been in the danger in which you have been. They tell me that you are very much broken down in your spirits by what has happened, and you appear to *me* to be so; nor do I wonder at it." "Oh! Sir," he replied, "if you mean *that*, I am quite easy in my mind." "What?" I said. "Your conscience, I suppose, assures you that you are innocent of all intention of committing murder?" "Yes, Sir," he answered; "the thing was proved to be an accident, and so the jury of my countrymen decided it to be." "Yes," I said, "but you yourself know more and much better than the jury, and God knows better even than *you*. Ah! Brockbourn, there were many strong circumstances which never came before the jury at all, and which, if they *had* come before them, would have made the case go much harder against you; and it would have been a miracle if you had escaped with your life."

When I said this, he was seized with a convulsive twitching all round his mouth, which betrayed great agitation; and I had occasion to applaud, immediately, the course which I had taken, of preparing him for the possibility of my saying something that

might affect his nerves, and yet of shewing him that he would have no ground for complaint against me. I did not indeed expect, that the principle which I had laid down would have come so soon into use ; but his saying that he was quite easy in his mind, an answer very different from what I looked for, and his appearing afterwards to evade my question about his conscience, had induced me to insinuate what I did ; that his acquittal by a jury, unacquainted with all the facts, would be of no use to him at another bar, where the secrets of the very heart were thoroughly known, unless the heart itself bore testimony in his favour, and was free from the too probable hazard of being warped by self-delusion.

He spoke nothing ; so I resumed in this manner. " At all events, the decision of the jury, humanly speaking, has been a fortunate thing for you, Brockbourn. If you were really not guilty, it has but done you justice ; and if you were guilty, yet many people will think you innocent, merely in consequence of that decision ; but, what is of greater consequence to you than the opinions of others, you will have more time to endeavour to make your peace with God ; *That* must be your main study for the remnant of your days ; because, whether you were, or were not, the murderer of your wretched, unhappy wife, at least you were the cause of her death, and in a moment of anger and violence. This of itself, without a deeper guilt, is matter enough for long and anxious sorrow and remorse. I presume, you do not deny this ? " " No, Sir," he replied ; " I confess it fully ; I would not deny it upon any account. " " Well," I said, " it makes a mighty difference to yourself in many respects, certainly, whether you did the deed intentionally,

or unintentionally ; but to *her*, poor creature, it made none whatever. She went to her account just the same, with all her sins fresh upon her head. Indeed, if she had been satisfied in her mind that her death was accidental, she might have been spared the terrible anguish of reflecting upon her husband as her murderer. But this, I fear, was not the case ; this comfort was, I think, withheld from her. My own opinion is, that she died under the impression that you intended to deprive her of her life. Yet she forgave you ; with her last breath she prayed that you might not be taken, and committed to a prison, or put to the danger of expiating the deed, violently and ignominiously, by the hands of the executioner. But why did she pray so, if it were not that time might be spared you for such a deep and prolonged repentance as you yourself had made impossible to *her* ? If this was her meaning, (and I cannot conceive that she had any other,) her prayer was a noble, a divine charity, and should go to your very heart."

I should have expected that so tender and touching a sentiment (as it appears at least to *me*) would have drawn a copious shower of tears from his eyes ; but it seemed that Jacob Broekbourn was formed in a different mould, and had nothing soft, or feminine about him. Nor should he be immediately condemned ; such an expression of feeling may be, in a great measure, constitutional. That he *did* feel on the present occasion was evident enough by the increased convulsive twitching of his mouth, and by his averting his face for a short time almost entirely from me. As soon as he had resumed his position, and I saw that he had no intention to speak, I continued thus : " I do not know whether you have sufficiently considered,

what it is which makes your calamity so grievous ; but it is fit that you should be fully aware of the utmost extent of it. There is no solid comfort to be derived from an endeavour to soften it down to your own thoughts ; and if I were to take that course with you, I should ill discharge my office ; I should deceive you in a most culpable manner, and your comfort, being a false one, might be your ruin. No, you must look your calamity steadily in the face, and then apply to God, as the correct view of it may teach you, and urge you to do. If you were the murderer of your wife, I do not want you to tell me so ; I only want you to settle that matter, impartially, between God and your own conscience : so that it may not appear hereafter, to your everlasting confusion, when *he* comes to try you, that you have reckoned erroneously, and deceived even yourself. Nor, on the other hand, will it avail you at all, with respect to this particular point which I so much wish to impress upon you, it will not avail you to plead, that her death was not intended by you, but only her correction ; I mean, that you cannot get rid of the fact, that, in consequence of your treatment of her, she went hastily and too much unprepared before her Judge ; nay, in an actual, immediate state of sin, which would cause even the most indifferent person, who reflected upon it, to tremble for her ultimate and eternal lot. You who knew all her habits too well, cannot possibly be ignorant what a tremendous reckoning she is gone from this world, suddenly and unexpectedly, to make in the other world, and therefore also what a tremendous result, it may reasonably be feared, will follow such a reckoning ; and then the certainty comes home to your own bosom, that it was *you* who deprived her of the means and

opportunities, which she might otherwise have had, before she died in the course of nature, to return from Satan to God. I do not say that you may not be acquitted and forgiven for this at the heavenly bar, as you have been at the earthly, if you take the proper steps to procure forgiveness; but I *do* say, that you will with great difficulty forgive yourself, if you feel your situation as you ought. Will you not ask yourself continually, where is her soul now? Will not the fearful thought mix itself with all your affairs that her soul may be entered into eternal misery? And will you not then be harrowed up with remorse, when you think again, as you must always do, that it was *you* who sent her there? If you ever suffer yourself to try to taste any pleasure, will it not be embittered by this constant care? Will it not become worse than gall and wormwood to you? Will you not condemn yourself for the very idea of pursuing any pleasure, and say, I have flung *her* from everlasting pleasures into everlasting woe! In your daily labours, too, when you are earning your bread by the sweat of your brow, will not the same reflection make all the instruments of your work feel heavier in your hands, and your work itself harder and more toilsome? Heretofore your industry was supported and cheered by many consolations and many hopes; what will support it, what will cheer it now? But at length comes the end of all in this world, death; and then the judgment in the next. But whom will you see, standing with you, and waiting for the sentence, at the same bar? Even *her*, your own wife, whom your own hand slew! And will you not be agonized with the sight of her, and still more with her voice, when she opens her mouth,

at the command of the terrible Judge, to speak the very truth, and therefore to accuse and condemn you?"

I began this speech, and went on to a certain point, with a perfect self-possession, so as to bring all the little ability which I had to bear upon my subject; but, by degrees, finding myself wrought up to a correspondent feeling with it, and my tongue faltering, I stopped entirely with the sentence just recorded. It is very probable that some of the readers of this scene may think the case exaggerated; and perhaps it was. But I had two reasons for putting the transaction in the light in which I did. First, it was clear to me, in spite of all the reports of his sorrow, that the killing his wife, under *her* peculiar circumstances, had never occurred to him as a thing more to be lamented than the mere killing of any person, or at least a wife, under any circumstances whatever. To deprive a fellow-creature of life he might know and acknowledge to be an awful matter; and still more, if that fellow-creature were his wife; but he had never considered how infinitely awful the deed became, if she were a wicked woman, and should die without repentance and unprepared. It is this in fact which gives to the crime of murder itself its greatest horror; that whilst it destroys the body, it may in the same instant destroy the soul too. Secondly, my suspicions had gained strength, that if he were not absolutely and strictly the murderer of his wife, yet in the act of beating her he was conscious to himself of an utter carelessness whether she died under his hands or not; a suspicion, which, if true, would account for some parts of his conduct that seem otherwise inexplicable. On these grounds

then it was that I aggravated, before I thought it proper to attempt to alleviate the load of sorrow under which this man might be supposed to labour.

But the reader will desire to know how he was affected by what I said. For some time after I stopped he was speechless. He manifestly wished to speak, but was unable. The spasms in his face, and especially about his lips, were so rapid and so strong that probably articulation was impossible to him. Often too, during my speech, he had averted his countenance, as might have been easily supposed, for the purpose of hiding his tears; but when his eyes met mine again, I perceived that they were still dry. The only remaining symptom of his feelings was his frequent change of posture. He rested sometimes on one leg and sometimes on the other; and now and then he appeared to totter a little under his own weight.

Meanwhile I was collecting myself to return to the charge; but, at length, before I was ready, he spoke himself, stammering out his words with difficulty, and saying, "But you forget, Sir, surely, that she lived several hours, and therefore was not without time for repentance." This was not in the right spirit, and I did not approve of it by any means. If he had said, 'Ah! Sir, it is too true that her time was short: but God grant, in his mercy, that she may have employed it well to her salvation, and that so heavy a sin as that of sending her out of the world without repentance, may not be laid upon me!' this would have been satisfactory to me, and acceptable, I doubt not, above; but what he really said betokened no desire of humbling himself under God's



mighty hand ; it was the speech of one who would justify himself instead of confessing his sins and suing unreservedly for pardon ; and therefore I determined at once to beat it down to the ground.

" Was not this poor woman much given to drinking ?" I asked. " Yes, indeed," he answered eagerly, so as to betray his thought, that the magnifying of *her* crimes would diminish his own. " She spent in liquor all that she could get by her work, or by begging from her daughter ; and she even went to my sister sometimes, and obtained money from her, by accusing me falsely of half-starving her." " And was not this unfortunate habit," I asked again, " a habit of long continuance, and practised for years ?" " Yes," he replied with the same earnestness, and looking me full in the face ; " she began it even when she was a girl." " Nor," I said, " was it her only bad habit, I fear." " No, indeed," he answered as before ; " she had another as bad, and even worse, and which she began as early too ; which you may partly understand by her having two children not born in wedlock. Yes, Sir," he said with a strong emphasis, " this and drinking went on together to her dying day." " So I was afraid," I rejoined. " But now tell me whether God has not doomed all adulterers, and fornicators, and drunkards, continuing such, to the punishment of everlasting fire ?" " 'Tis true, indeed, Sir," he replied in a lower tone. " And which are worst," I asked, " they who commit those sins now and then, casually, or they who commit them habitually ?" " These, to be sure, Sir," he answered. " Which also," I said, " of the two are most likely to be able to forsake their sins ; the casual or the habitual sinners ?" " The casual, with-

out doubt, Sir," he replied. "Then repentance will be a more difficult thing to the habitual sinners; will it not?" I asked. "I suppose it will, Sir," he answered, but with a little seeming reluctance, as if he began to suspect that he was involving himself in troubles. "And will not God also expect," I said, "that the repentance of such sinners should be longer, and deeper, and more painful, so as to be a better proof that they have returned to him with sincerity?" He hesitated, as a man now clearly seeing his danger, but being pressed for his answer, he murmured, "Yes."

"Well, Brockbourn," I said, "you told me, two or three minutes ago, that your poor wife was not without time for repentance, because she lived several hours after the death-blow was given; what do you think now? If she had lived several days instead of hours only, would *that* have been time enough for such a repentance as we have just agreed that God must expect in such a case? A repentance that was to wash out the guilt of years, nay, of a whole life? It is true, the mighty power of the Spirit of God might have enabled her to repent efficaciously, and might have cleansed her from all impurity, in a single instant; the great Saviour, who paid down his life as a ransom for us all, might have forgiven and saved *her*, as he did the thief, in the last moment of her mortal existence, by whatever crimes she was stained; but are these mere possibilities sufficient to persuade you that the thing was actually done? On the very contrary, does not your certain knowledge of the uncommonness of the accomplishment of such wonderful things, convince you at once that no individual sinner has any reason to expect them; nay, that the

expectation of them is itself not only unreasonable; but sinful too; because it implies, that you throw away all the common means which God has appointed for your salvation, and are resolved to be saved, if at all, only by some extraordinary, supernatural, miraculous exercise of his mercy?"

I paused for an instant to observe him; he was wrapped in thought, as if he were trying to comprehend what I had said; and perhaps he did not. So I began again in this manner. "But you do not mean, perhaps, merely to tell me, that, in *your* opinion, she had time for repentance; you have, no doubt, diligently and anxiously inquired, and you know the fact, that she *did* repent; and that her repentance was such as you might think effectual; or, rather, you sent repeated and urgent messages to her in the very outset, by some common friend or kinsman, to suggest the necessity of a speedy and a serious repentance; was this so?"—"It was impossible, Sir," he answered, recovering a little confidence, "it was impossible for me to do anything of this kind. I was in the hands of the officers, and was not permitted to see any body, whilst her death was uncertain; and afterwards I was committed to prison, and had enough to do to think of myself."—"But after your acquittal and discharge," I said, "you went to the hospital, of course, and inquired into all the mournful particulars of her latter end; whether it was consoled, or not, by the consciousness of penitence, by faith in her Redeemer's blood, by the hope of immortality?" He had done nothing of this sort; his countenance, distorted with spasms, betrayed the truth, and the lashes of his conscience: he was speechless, and dismayed. "But," I con-

tinued, not sparing him, "at least you questioned Mrs. Martin about it. She was in attendance upon the wretched creature up to the time of her departure for the hospital, and is well acquainted with every material circumstance; and you might have asked her, when you came to see her, on the very night of your discharge from prison; did you do so?"—"I will speak the truth, Sir," he replied faltering; "I did not ask her; I was too full of my own situation; I came to thank her for being one of my witnesses."—"Very well," I said; "I can allow for some confusion of mind arising from your peculiar circumstances, the sudden removal of a tremendous danger which seemed to be hanging over you; but still I wonder, that the far more tremendous danger of your poor wife's soul, a danger hastened on by yourself, should not have occupied a portion at least of your thoughts. You had yourself escaped the first death, which is the least terrible; it was natural that you should have inquired anxiously about *her*, whom you had exposed to the infinitely terrible condemnation of the second death. However, you have seen Mrs. Martin since, when you were more calm and composed; when you were able to look back with less horror upon the scaffold and the halter, which once haunted your imagination; and when the exulting joy of your escape was moderated down into a quieter and more rational feeling; *then*, I presume, you sifted all the facts of the piteous case, and grasped with eagerness every little twig, which promised you the slightest support, under the fearful idea, that, whether you had murdered your wife's body or not, you might have murdered her unhappy soul; was this what you did?"

Again he was reduced to silence, and betrayed his emotions by the same symptoms ; but still he shed no tear. " Well then," I said, " you have taken no pains, it seems, to ascertain, whether she repented or not ; and so far as *you* know, she is gone without having repented at all. And yet, as you considered that she had time for repentance, you must have been aware, that her not using the time graciously allowed her for such a purpose would greatly aggravate the whole of her sin, and make her liable to a heavier damnation. This should have caused more anxiety on your part, to search immediately to the bottom of the matter. However, *that* is past, and cannot now be recalled ; but you may still argue, conclusively, upon the facts which I will relate to you, whether she was ever in a favourable state for repentance ; and, if she *did* repent, what sort of repentance it was likely to be." Such an investigation was by no means one that could possibly be correspondent to his wishes ; it could scarcely fail of recalling terrible images to his memory ; it was almost sure to bring him to the knowledge and feeling of a greater burden of guilt than that of which he was already conscious ; but all this I supposed to be for his profit, and any proposition of mine it was difficult for him to refuse. He gave, however, only a tacit assent ; his perturbation was too great for words. A wounded spirit who can bear !

" When you fled from the sight of your own deed," I said, " you left her totally a wreck on the floor ; stunned with your blows, senseless with the loss of blood, which flowed profusely from her head, and from some internal rupture. At the same moment, too, if she had not been senseless on these two accounts, yet her intellects must needs have been en-

firely confused and disordered by the liquor which she had been drinking throughout the day, and up to this fatal period. She was alive, indeed, as one who sleeps is alive; or rather as the creatures which are lowest in the scale of God's works; not alive to sense; to reason quite a blank; of any movement towards repentance utterly incapable. I know not how long this condition lasted; you will not reckon it, I presume, as a part of the time which she might have employed in the attempt to make her peace with God."

I paused; he uttered only a sigh. It was the first which had yet escaped from his breast. I continued thus. "But at length she wakes, if I may call it so; the cloud of stupefaction breaks, and a beam of light is seen. Now, you will hope, she begins at once to repent. Alas! no; she wakes to sense alone, and not to reason. She opens her convulsed and swollen eyes; but they recognise no face around her bed. She speaks, but her tongue pronounces nothing rational, nothing coherent; nothing that indicates a knowledge of the desperate state in which she lies. By her incessant screams and groans she bears witness to her feeling of some constant agonizing bodily pain; by her delirious ravings she proves that she has no mind. This period, therefore, I presume as before, you will except from the hours which you spoke of as being at her command for repentance."

I paused again; his spasms and his sighs increased, but he did not interpose a single word. I pursued my course. "At last a glimmering of reason shews itself, but faint and horrible. She discovers her bleeding wounds; she expects that they will quickly bring her to a miserable death; she recollects the

cruel blows which caused her wounds, and *him* who gave the blows; she bursts forth, in the spirit of revenge, ‘Oh! take him! take him! Let him not escape! Bring him to justice! Repay him tenfold for what he has done to *me*! I die—I die—but let me first know that *he* is taken!’”

This description shook the whole frame of the man; his lips quivered with agony, his knees knocked against each other, he let fall his hat, and lifted his hands to his head, and clasped them fast together and stood trembling and aghast in breathless expectation of what was yet to come. I pitied him at this instant, and determined to console him; so I reminded him of what I had told him before, that a few hours afterwards she both forgave him, and wished for his safety. “But I desire you to mark,” I said, “in order to avoid all self-deceit, how large a portion of the interval which you thought long enough for a thorough repentance, was passed, uselessly, in insensibility and delirium, or worse, with the unchristian feeling of a revengeful spirit, the most opposite to repentance imaginable. In this period she was losing instead of gaining ground in God’s favour; but I am willing to persuade myself and *you*, that the fumes of the pernicious liquor were not yet dispersed, nor her understanding yet free and clear; so that this additional sin may not be laid to her charge. Next comes the whole remaining time of her stay in her own house. Alas! I do not know that it admitted of anything like a heart-felt repentance, or of more than one religious act. She prayed certainly by Mrs. Martin’s desire, and under *her* instructions; she asked, I believe, for pardon; but, whether she had any deep and contrite sense of her own unworthiness,

so as to prevail at all over the circumstances of her present pain and misery ; or, whether she looked up with the eye of faith to our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, as to one who came to seek and to save that which was lost ; or, whether she sought earnestly for the powerful influences of the Holy Spirit to renew her in the spirit of her own mind, I cannot tell you ; for I do not know ; nobody knows ; her prayer was general for mercy ; all the rest, if there was anything more, took place in her own secret breast. All the time, remember, she was moaning with her pains, and bewailing her unhappy lot ; she was harassed with the cutting off of her clotted hair, and with the probing and dressing her wounds ; and what perhaps distracted her most, she was pressed continually with innumerable questions about the deed itself, which had stretched her so suddenly on the bed of death. Sad circumstances all, and sad impediments to a beginning penitence ! Yet it was at the end of this afflicting period, that the first feeling of a Christian spirit began to stir within her ; it was now that she forgave all her enemies, all who had contributed in any way to her sorrows, and especially *you*. This was not repentance indeed ; but it was a necessary step to reconciliation with God. He will not be approached, no, not even in his Son's name, unless we have utterly dislodged from our breasts the evil passions of hatred, malice, and revenge. She had done this, by *his* help, no doubt ; she might now approach him, therefore, and ask for further aid."

Here I stopped, and he seemed to be greatly relieved. This might be in two ways ; that he was now sure that no actual curse from her lips rested



upon him to pursue him through life ; and that she herself, having performed the important acts of forgiveness and prayer, might be supposed to be aware of her awful condition, and likely to advance to something effectual in the steps of penitence. But he did not explain his sentiments ; what has been said is nothing but my own conjecture ; and I resumed after a few moments, in the following manner, with the view to damp every vain imagination.

“The rest of the short time allotted to her was spent in the hospital. Her poor daughter was with her there at the first when she was admitted ; and I confess, that the account given me by *her* does not encourage me to think that she either *did* repent, or was capable of repenting during that interval, as any person would wish her to have done, who knows what a true and solid repentance is. At least there were no outward signs of it ; and it is certain that the bodily pain which she endured, and the anguish of mind that tormented her, not because of her great and long-continued sins, as far as I can find, but because of the complicated misery of her situation, rendered what we might call a worthy and an effectual repentance extremely difficult, and therefore the more improbable. That she both prayed and asked to be forgiven, now and then, there can be no doubt ; but, alas ! how far does this fall short of the unintermitted and ardent efforts, the constant sighs and breathings after help from above, the floods of tears, which should seem necessary for a soul ruined and lost in sin, to enable it to regain the favour of its Saviour and God ! However, we may be sure that she would have the assistance of the chaplain of the hospital, as soon as it could be procured, to teach her, what I

fear she had even then to learn, from whence alone were to come the mighty blessings of which she stood in need, and what those blessings were ; the humble, and contrite, and penitent heart, abased by the true knowledge of itself ; the only prevailing spirit of supplication, in the name of Christ Jesus ; a new strength not her own, derived from the influxes of a powerful sanctifying grace ; and, thenceforward, perhaps, some taste of a tranquil peace of mind, and some glimmering hopes of heaven. He might have attempted to teach her these things, and to enable her to acquire them even at the last ; but we are ignorant, and we shall always be ignorant whilst we are here, whether she learnt them or possessed them. They are God's especial gift ; and we cannot know at present, whether he gave them, or permitted to her, at so late an hour, the use of her faculties to receive them. With this terrible doubt, therefore, which must always hang about you, you can only travel onwards, sorrowing, through life ; although you may persuade yourself that you had no intention of bringing her to the grave, yet, by my advice, you will never be, what you told me in the beginning of our conversation, ' quite easy in your mind ; ' nor will you endeavour to excuse yourself to your own conscience by saying, as you told me afterwards, that she was not without time for repentance. These would be broken reeds to lean upon, and would undoubtedly fail you at your need. But to ask mercy for her is now in vain, when her lot is fixed ; no, you must ask it for yourself, and you must never be out of the way of it ; you must neglect no duty ; you must abandon every vice ; you must catch at every grace, by private

prayer, by public worship, by a constant attendance at the altar. This do and *your* soul shall yet live."

It would be difficult for me to explain my notion of the impression which appeared to be made upon him by these observations and admonitions as I went along; his feeling was, probably, never one single feeling, unmixed with others, and capable of being described by a single word, but combined of many and various feelings, uniting with difficulty in the same person, and causing the greater agitation by their mutual collisions and contentions for the sole government of the man. However, in my concluding sentence it was evident at once that he entirely and perfectly acquiesced; and the consciousness that he had already entered upon the career which I recommended to him, bore up his spirits, and smoothed his brow, and brightened his countenance, and seemed to infuse an unwonted calm into his breast. I waited to see if he would speak, that I might form a better judgment how to proceed with him. I had finished one awful topic; but others remained which I was unwilling to omit, and for which I hoped that he would give me a convenient opening; and I soon perceived that at all events he was preparing to say something, whether to my purpose or not. But at this instant the door opened, and two or three of my children entered the room to kiss me, and receive my blessing, before they went to bed. They seemed to wish, and yet to fear, to see Jacob Brockbourn: so they came not, as usual, with eager steps, and smiling countenances, and extended arms; but slow and serious, and looking at *him* instead of *me*, yet not direct, but with half-averted eyes, and satisfied with

*stealing* a view of a man, whose hands had been embued, as they supposed, in his wife's blood, and whose life had been nearly forfeited to the laws. I was glad of this little interruption, and felt relief from it ; but I dismissed them with all convenient speed, the time being precious.

When we were again by ourselves, I said, " You were about to speak, Jacob ; I hope the children have not disturbed you ? " " No, Sir," he replied, with a good deal of self-possession, " not at all ; I was going to thank you, Sir, for opening my eyes to see more clearly than I did, the nature and consequence of my calamity ; and if I had not seen this, I could not have conducted myself properly. The minister at the prison, after my discharge, gave me some good advice like yours, Sir ; and I began at once to follow it. I had great reason to do so ; but you have now shewn me, Sir, that I have more reason to do it than I thought. I will use my best endeavour to avoid sin and to serve God, depend upon it, Sir. If I did not, warned as I have been, how could I look my Judge in the face when I stand before him at the last day ? "

This was well ; but it seemed expedient to go into particulars ; so I said solemnly, " You have indeed been warned most awfully and tremendously beyond all others, and especially with regard to one crime, that of drunkenness. Were you not yourself intoxicated that fatal night ? " He hesitated to answer me, and the spasms began to twitch him again. I penetrated the workings of his thoughts ; he was debating within himself, I doubted not, which would be most for his advantage, to confess, or to deny, that he was intoxicated. I say, his advantage. Alas ! he was

not so well versed in the ways of religion as to dare, or to know how, to estimate his advantage correctly. Still he wished to make a shew, still to palliate, still to excuse, instead of bowing in an entire unqualified obedience to truth, and prostrating every faculty which he had in humble submission before the God of truth. At length, observing that I waited for him in surprise, he replied jesuitically, "I am a sober man, Sir; but I had certainly been drinking more that day than was usual with me." "I knew it," I said, with somewhat of severity; "I knew it perfectly well. You are in the wrong to try to conceal any of your offences against God; to hesitate so long about it, and then to give me a shuffling, indecisive answer. It is unworthy of your present state. I expected better things from you." He was abashed by this rebuke, and I proceeded without a pause. "But I shall be able, perhaps, in this circumstance of your case also, to point out something for your serious consideration, which has never yet struck your mind. You have the character and credit of industry; and your present master, especially, praises in high terms your regular and punctual attention to your work. On that unhappy day, however, you determined, nobody knows why, to leave your work; which you were scarcely ever observed to have done before without the best reasons. On the sudden, without assigning any reasons at all except your own will, you resolved to have a holiday, and to go in search of your friends, and to enlist as many of them as you could into your scheme of idleness and merry-making for the whole day. This perhaps was no great injury to your master; it might be more or less, according to the nature of the work on which he was then

employing you. Nor will I dwell upon the injury done to your friends ; some of whom, most probably, were induced by *you* to spend their money merrily in the alehouse, whilst their wives and children were starving piteously at home ; but I pass this. You drank with these friends to intoxication ; I know the fact ; you were intoxicated early in the day ; and it is not likely that you should have been sober at night. See then the judgment of God upon you ! You lay aside your praiseworthy conduct of industry and sobriety ; you rush wilfully into idleness and drinking, both contrary to your common practice ; of what other disobedience to God's laws you were guilty when you became intoxicated, I am entirely ignorant, but I know that crime seldom goes alone. Well, mark the end ! Before midnight had closed upon you, you were a vagabond from your house, and proclaimed a murderer. For a day and a part of the succeeding night you revelled in joy, and you said perhaps to yourself, ' to-morrow shall be as to-day ; ' but it was a false delusive joy, and a vain promise ; you were transgressing the commandments of God ; his wrath went out against you ; he withdrew his control over your passions ; he suffered them to have their full swing ; and thus, in a few minutes more, behold you are in the gulphs of sorrow. You slay a human creature made in the divine image ; nay, *her* to whom you had sworn to cleave for ever ; you fly, you are overtaken, and you immediately anticipate a murderer's death. Was not your evil pleasure bought at a tremendous cost ? It is true, however, you are spared ; but who would purchase even mines of gold with the agonies which you have undergone, and must still undergo, before peace is re-established in your breast ?"

I will not describe again the various symptoms of the man's agitation; they were nearly the same as before; but I had not yet done, and I could not cease to afflict him, because there appeared to be too much of the old bad leaven still working within him, and he did not seem to have taken a striking view of the several points of his own situation. However, I threw in a softening expression or two to make him more patient under the severities of my correction. "Remember," I said, "what we concurred in at the first, and you will not be angry with me for inflicting so much pain upon you. Besides, you may console yourself, even under the sufferance of the pain, with being assured, that your repentance may be more perfect hereafter, if you become thoroughly acquainted with all the aggravations of your own case. When you came to me to-night, you were deficient, certainly, in this necessary knowledge; and, what is worse, you were too much inclined to favour yourself, and to repose upon false supports, and even to make false excuses. But you tell me that I have opened your eyes, and I am glad of it for your own sake alone. In doing it, however, I have been compelled to pierce you through and through with many sorrows, and I must pierce again; but never mind; these are wholesome sorrows, and, if they bruise you now, they will heal you hereafter."

If it had not been for the apprehension of something dreadful to follow, he would have been much composed by this little speech. I verily believe that he expected me to lay bare the inmost recesses of his heart; but I am quite sure, by the whole tenour of his behaviour, that there were secrets, which he would wish to keep locked up there for ever. However, in

my mode of talking to him, I had provided for the very worst and most terrible supposition. If he was a murderer, without my convicting him of it, he could not but see just as clearly, that his guilt was not the simple destruction of life, but an accumulation of horrors upon horrors.

But I now went on, whilst he stood trembling before me. "You had probably separated all your other transactions of the day and night from the last direful deed, and considered them as quite unconnected. If you did so, you were wrong. For, it is evident, humanly speaking, that if you had been at your labour, as usual, you would have come home early, as usual; and then your unfortunate wife, who had intoxicated herself in the morning, being awed by your presence, would not have dared to return to her cups in the evening; and thus her life would have been in no danger. It was not only a blow from your hand, therefore, but also your idleness, and drinking, which occasioned her death; you went astray from the paths of industry and sobriety; and thus did God judge you for it. Why he judged with so much apparent severity *you*, who were only casually idle and drunken, whilst he lightly afflicts, or even seems to pass by altogether, habitual and more heinous sinners, is an act of his providence which I do not pretend to explain: his ways are unsearchable, and past finding out; but the use which you may make of it is manifest at once. Never has any man received such a warning as *you* have to shun idleness and drunkenness. It is thunder to roll for ever over your head, and to guard you against the bolt ready to strike. Beware, therefore, of the first tendency towards idleness and drunkenness, two great



destroyers of mankind. If, hereafter, you suffer yourself to give way for an instant to any such tendency, you will be the most foolish of men; one whom no awful events, or personal dangers, can effectually instruct; you will shew an utter disregard and contempt of God's power, which has once almost crushed you; you will do a wilful despite to his mercy, which has now graciously preserved you; and thus, being a man not to be stirred by fear or love, what comes next? Why, the bolt will strike, winged with tenfold vengeance, and will destroy, not temporally alone, but eternally."

This seemed to affect him powerfully, but he was not unable to speak, and he told me what the minister of the prison had said to him on the same subject; "and you may enquire, Sir," he added, "both of my master, and at the house where I lodge, what my habits are; but, if possible, Sir, I shall be more resolved and more watchful, even than I was, after what I have just heard from *you*. I see now that I am under a greater necessity than I thought."—"Very well," I said; "may God prosper you, and enable you to maintain your resolutions unbroken, and your vigilance unintermitted? And he will unquestionably do so, if you ask him in his Son's name; continually and sincerely, and from your heart; feeling your wants, and trusting to *him* to supply them."—"I go to church, Sir," he answered, "without failing, every Sunday, at six o'clock in the evening. The minister told me particularly to be sure to go every Sabbath to some church or chapel, as might be most convenient and most improving to me; and I do it."

This minister was rather lax, I thought, in his

opinions, and very unorthodox, if he were a minister of the establishment ; so I enquired his name, and, when I heard it, I knew immediately that he was a dissenter from the church ; which accounted sufficiently for his putting churches and chapels on the same level. Indeed it displayed some liberality of mind, that he did not proscribe the church, and exalt the chapel above it ; but, it seems, he gave the poor man the option of either, according to his own taste and convenience. I do not know to what class of Christians this gentleman belongs ; and I am sure that the chief part of his conversation with Jacob Brockbourn, as related to me, was extremely proper ; but, speaking generally, the doctrines of dissenters are not such as to warrant the magistrates in appointing them to the spiritual care of prisons, and the results are often a fatal proof of the impropriety of the choice. However, in this enlightened age, dissenters themselves (often very excellent men it must be allowed) get into the magistracy, and then there is no wonder that we see dissenting ministers employed in this important station. Besides, there are abundance of magistrates, nominally churchmen, so delicate and scrupulous with respect to all exclusive systems, as they call our's, or such pretenders to enlarged sentiments, or such suitors for party-applause, that they readily join with the dissenting magistrates in favouring their views, and betraying their own trust.

But let this pass. As Jacob Brockbourn had, by his own free choice, attached himself to the church, it would have been waste of time to enter into any discussion with him about the comparative merits of churches and chapels, even if he had been capable

of comprehending such a question ; so I contented myself with commending him, and exhorting him to go on as he had begun. But I enquired about his sister, who had lent him the tracts, and was glad to find that she was a church-woman too. However, I desired him to bring the tracts with him, when he paid me a second visit ; and I now gave him some of my own. " But, unfortunately," I said, " you cannot read, I am told. Will any body be so kind as to read them to you ? " " I hope so, Sir," he replied ; " for it is very true that I am no scholar. I could once read the Testament, Sir, with a little help, and with taking pains. It was my step-daughter who taught me at nights, out of her school-hours ; but when she went to place, I found it too hard to manage by myself, and so I left it off nearly altogether ; and now, when I want it so badly, I cannot recover even the little that I knew."

" This step-daughter of your's," I said, " appears to be a very pious, affectionate, and good young woman. I have had the pleasure of seeing her, and talking with her ; but it was a melancholy pleasure, and a very touching scene to go through. Ah ! Jacob, what a life of trouble and sorrow have you brought upon *her*, poor, innocent, tender-hearted creature. You have almost made her to verify, in her own piteous case, those striking passages of Scripture ; which describe a passionate and a rooted grief. You have caused her heart to be smitten down within her, and to wither like grass ; you have made her almost literally to water her bed with her tears, to mingle her drink with weeping, to be fed with the bread of tears, and to have plenteousness of tears to drink.

Whilst she was with me she wept incessantly. Her unfortunate mother's disastrous end, and the cruelties which occasioned it, will never cease, I believe, to torture her memory with the bitterest recollections."

His spasms now again betrayed his wounded spirit, but he replied with energy, "What would I give, Sir, to have the power of doing her some good! I would sacrifice even my life for *her* and her brother, if *that* might purchase them any happiness! She has kindly written to me, Sir, and we are to meet."—"Kindly do you call it?" I exclaimed. "*That* is a low expression for such an act of christian, heavenly charity. Ah! Brockbourn, when you meet how will she endure to touch the hand that slew her mother! To behold the face, dressed perhaps in smiles, but which her troubled fancy will picture as it was in that murderous night, distorted with brutal rage, and every feature seeming to imprecate curses upon one so dear to her, and to threaten the darkest deed of horror, your eyes glaring with a savage ferocity, and when the deed was done, exulting over the fallen, bleeding body! Will not the very sight of your hands bring instantly to her imagination the accursed rake, the terrible instrument of your cruel, unbridled fury? Will she not see you, with her disturbed mind's eye, in the very act, as it were, of redoubling your blows, still fierce and unsatiated, upon a defenceless woman, who lay already bruised and mangled at your feet, and that woman to *you* a wife, to *her* a mother? Oh! Brockbourn, if you meant correction, and not murder, this was base; this was unmanly; this was cowardly; nay, it was devilish! How much, then, has this poor girl to conquer, before she can bear to look upon that face, to meet that eye, and to touch that

hand! But she is a Christian, and she has imbibed her divine Master's spirit."

I had threatened to pierce him once more to his heart, and my threat was now executed. No aspen-leaf ever trembled so much as this man, though shaken by the rudest breeze; and his agitation was the greater, because he was eager to speak, and could not. I hastened to give him my last advice. "Oh! Brockbourn," I said, "for the remnant of your days resist, with all your might, the first rising of passion in your breast! Let it be the constant subject of your prayers to God that you may be able henceforth to curb and restrain it! You have felt how wild, how impetuous, how furious and uncontrollable the storm is, when you have once suffered it to gather strength within, and to burst abroad. The whirlwind might as soon be stopped and ruled. It beats down before it all the barriers of nature, of reason, and of religion. This it did in *your* case, Brockbourn; aye, it conquered and subdued, in your case, even the terror of a shameful death, of a halter, and a gibbet, for when your flight was cut off, you exclaimed to your pursuers, I have made up my mind to die for her; and you added wicked opprobrious expressions against her, which proved that all the night, even in your lurking-place, you had been brooding over your cruel deed with an unnatural malice, and that the same malice was still rankling in your heart."

Here the man was in an indescribable agony, and made signs to me that I should proceed no further till he himself had spoken. "Calm yourself, therefore," I said, "and I will hear you." But it was not so easy to do it as to advise it; and his hurry and impatience to speak made the task the more difficult.

When he attempted it, there was so much sighing intermixed with his sounds, that they were not articulate ; so much convulsion of the mouth, so much quivering of the lips, and, I doubt not, so much strangulation of the throat, that he could not even stammer out an intelligible word. So I said again, with a mild and soothing tone, " Do not distress yourself to speak at once ; I will not proceed till I have heard you ; I will wait quietly till you are quite composed." And immediately I turned away from him, and paced backwards and forwards across the room ; and then I snuffed my candle, and took up one of my children's books, (we were in the room used for their school), and I pretended to read it. In fact it was a mere pretence to give him time ; I was too deeply interested in the scene before me to admit any other thought.

At length, collected and firm beyond what I could have expected after such a tumult of trouble, he began, like the mighty monarchs of old, when the consciousness of sin and the afflicting hand of God had levelled their pride with the dust ; thus he began, and I listened to him with a mixture of satisfaction and awe. " I have sinned," he said ; " I confess it — I have sinned greatly ; I have sinned far, far beyond what I have ever acknowledged to man, or even what I was willing to lay to my own charge in the secrets of my own breast. But you have forced every thing from me, Sir, this night ; every thing that I knew, and every thing that I feared to know ; you have laid it all open, and I am amazed and tremble at it. I am one of the greatest of sinners."

Here he paused. My countenance was riveted upon *his* ; his eyes had suddenly become red, and tears, I thought, were about to burst from their

springs. I greeted in breathless silence, not his confession alone, but what confirmed it, this expressive token of his remorse ; my own tears began to flow, but mine were tears of satisfaction and pleasure. He continued ; “ But I should wish you to understand, Sir, that many things said of me are quite false. I have no desire to make excuses for myself any longer ; but I would not rest, without speaking, under the weight of so much slander. Perhaps I might have uttered the few words which you have mentioned, Sir ; but I am sure that I added nothing wicked or reproachful. My meaning has been perverted, Sir, entirely from the truth. No, no, Sir ! I was in no condition then to talk in that manner. The last look which I took of my wife ; the recollection of what she said as she fell ; the waking, restless hours which I passed in my hiding-place ; the cold, tempestuous night, which I felt the more from being without shelter over head, abated my passion, and sobered me, if I was intoxicated, and completely brought me back to myself ; to a fearful sense of my own danger, and to a painful remembrance of what I had done to *her*. No, no, Sir ! All the rancour which preyed upon my vitals before, and urged me on to desperation, was then quite burnt out ; it upheld my spirits no more ; I saw where I had sunk ; I was without power to act, or to think for my own safety. When the sky was streaked with the first light, I rose up from amidst the tall beans, where I had couched, and had been quaking at every sound ; I rose up, Sir, indeed, and attempted to escape ; but it was only seeming to attempt it ; for my limbs had lost their spring ; guilt had palsied their sinews ; I bid them move, but they denied me. Or would you be-

lieve, Sir, that I could have been taken as I was? By one of far less speed, of far less strength, of far less courage?"

As he spoke thus, his tone became more vehement, and his face for an instant assumed a different character. A sudden glow of anger flashed over it; he looked fiercely, as if he were about to rush to the combat; he was proud in the consciousness of superiority. But soon relaxing into his former tone, he continued thus: "No, no, Sir! My guilt had cowed me, and I cared not what became of me. I was in no condition or temper to use the words which they falsely imputed to me. I wished for death, not because I had glutted my fury, but because I saw only woe before me in life."

"Well," I said, "this must be left, like many other things, to your own conscience. You must examine it without shrinking, and search to the very bottom with an inflexible severity: for if you yourself do not, God will, you may be sure; and it is much better that *you* should do it, than *he*. And I will tell you plainly, that whoever might be capable of speaking such words at such a moment can have nothing of human nature about him. At least he must be sunk below the lowest condition of man, living in savage wilds, without social intercourse, without domestic charities, without law, without God and religion. But it is too true that such wretched beings exist sometimes even amongst civilized men. They have neglected God, his word, and his worship; and so he has cast them off, and given them up to their own lusts and furious passions; and thus they plunge into crimes which savages themselves would blush at or abhor. You have neglected religion, Jacob; I



know it well ; and so your passions have been growing up to get the mastery over you ; they had no strong tie to bind them ; they had little of natural tenderness to soften them. For although I might acquit you, and you might acquit yourself of that last atrocity, yet no man will acquit you, nor you yourself, of most atrocious cruelty. It came home, it seems, to your own bosom with an avenging pang, at the very instant of your flight. You were reported at your trial to have been an indulgent husband ; and your poor wife herself, I know, even after you had beat her repeatedly, still allowed it, and appeared to be glad to mention every instance of your love for her. But, Oh ! Brockbourn, where was this love, when you seized such a murderous implement as that rake with its iron teeth ; when you brandished it in your hands, and smote all around you with undistinguishing rage, and shattered everything that came in its way ; and still more, where was your love, when she besought your mercy, and adjured you perhaps by the recollection of all your former mutual endearments, and fell to the ground exclaiming that you had killed her ; yet you continued your strokes, without one tender thought to stop your uplifted hand, upon her poor fractured and streaming head, beating the ground itself too on each side in your fury, until her tongue could no longer intreat your pity, nor her eye look up to you with the expectation of it ; in short, until she was speechless, and senseless and her eyes closed, apparently to open no more in this world. No memory of past kindnesses between you both once occurred ; no faint spark of affection once rekindled itself within you ; everything sacred, everything dear in your connexion with her, was driven from your

breast; your own eye neither pitied, nor spared. But I can proceed no farther with the description of such a scene as this; I will hasten to that which follows."

I had now touched, at length, the right chord for stirring his softer emotions, if he had any; and it appeared that he had. Unconcerned myself, yet, by the mere force of imagination, I had worked myself up to a high pitch of feeling; but Jacob Brockbourn wept now in earnest; these things were no empty imaginations to *him*; these were substantial, dire realities. He wept aloud and sore, like Esau; and like *him* he could not undo the past. I contemplated him, as I had done before, with compassion; but a thought came suddenly and forcibly into my mind, which, I knew, must create him still more pain, and yet my duty required that I should give it vent, to warn him. "Ah! mark," I said, solemnly and devoutly, "mark the displeasure and the judgment of God upon this connexion of yours with Mary Brockbourn! It began in lust; it has ended in death. To make that connexion you transgressed God's laws; you broke it by a worse transgression than the first—you corrupted her, and now you have slain her. You attempted indeed to cast a veil over your earlier sin by the sacred ceremony of marriage: but your marriage was a profanation of all that is sacred, and God would not bless it. No, the rite must be hallowed by modesty, by chastity, by purity of manners and heart, to draw down upon it the favourable regard of heaven. These beautiful graces were not in your train when you entered the temple of God, and they did not accompany you back from thence. You went there no more to ask him to sanctify this deed; you thought not of him; you lived without him; but

he was preparing a bitter recompense, and at length he emptied the vial of his wrath upon you. Mark this, and shun the incitements of lust; 'when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.'

He was deeply struck with this brief history of himself, and with the new world of providences which I had now opened to his view. Every symptom of an agitated mind was renewed, and tears, more and more abundant, were superadded to the rest; but his tears seemed to relieve him from the effects of the other more painful symptoms, and to restore the faculty of speech. However, it was not long after I stopped, and before I had fixed upon any probable method of still further awakening his conscience and setting it to work, when he broke the silence himself, and told his own story with correspondent gestures, forcibly and pathetically, and I think very nearly thus:—

"Yes, Sir," he said, "it is true enough. From the beginning to the ending God has not been with me. How should he? I was sinning against him continually; I see it now, and I will make no more vain excuses to myself, or to *you*, Sir. But hear me, Sir, I beseech you, for a few minutes, whilst I relate the circumstances of the last unlucky night. Whoever knows them will have some compassion upon me at the least, I am sure, even whilst he condemns me, and hates me for my deed. As I came near to the cluster of cottages, Sir, I heard loud and confused sounds of merriment. Ah! I said to myself, trembling with alarm and fear, surely my Mary is not amongst those riotous people! Surely, she has not forgotten, so soon, the correction which I gave

her but last Sunday for her drunkenness ! Well, Sir, I went to my own cottage ; the door was unfastened ; the fire was gone out ; all was pitch-darkness ; I called, but nobody answered. My mind misgave me, and I shook all over from head to foot. However, I groped my way up-stairs ; there was a chance that she might be fast asleep in bed. I hoped it was so, but my fear was greater than my hope. I felt all over the bed, Sir, with my two hands ; she was not there. I trembled more than ever, but I was roused too, and my anger was kindled, and the thought pressed itself upon me, that I must punish severely for this. There was another bed in a corner, and I heard some one breathing in it. It might be *her*, I fancied, she used to sleep there when she was intoxicated ; for I would not suffer her to sleep with *me*. I felt ; it was her son. Then it is too true, I said ; she is drinking and singing with yonder drunken noisy folks ; but I must fetch her home ; and now my trouble and my anger were more than I could bear. I came down stairs again, and struck a light, and out I went with a hurried step and a beating heart. I knocked loudly and wrathfully at Hodges' door ; they answered me from the window above, that everybody was just gone, and my wife amongst the rest. What could I do now ? Where could I go to search for her ? My brain began to burn ; dreadful suspicions darted through it. But whilst I stood fixed to the spot in this doubt and uncertainty of mind, a voice caught my ears ; it was hers ! I started ; it came from a hovel at a short distance. I listened, and heard the voice of another person talking and laughing with her ; it was a man's voice ! Distraction seized me ; I rushed thitherward ; I ex-

pected to see a sight that would blast my eyes, and blight my peace for ever ; I had no weapon with me, but my right hand was armed with vengeance. Well, Sir ; I found no man in the hovel, I confess it ; nor did I perceive any man escape ; what became of him, I cannot guess ; *her* I found lying upon some scattered straw. Who would doubt the deed, Sir, either done, or intended to be done ? I was worked up to madness. Who will bear to walk the earth, a thing for fingers to point at, a butt for jests and scorn, to reckon himself a man no more ?”

His own energy and excess of feeling suddenly overwhelmed him here, and stopped his utterance. The image of the events, no doubt, flashed vividly across his mind, and placed him again on the agonizing spot, where his honour, as he thought, had been stabbed and destroyed. But at length, with a terrible effort, he resumed, and exclaimed fiercely, “ I dragged her home, Sir,” then remembering, I suppose, with commiseration and remorse, the succeeding scene of horror, he relented in an instant, and said with tears and sobs, “ I can relate no more ; you have described the rest yourself, Sir.”

As soon as I was able to speak, I said, “ You were thrown into a very difficult and trying situation it must be acknowledged ; and there is no man, conscious of his own infirmities, who will not be disposed to pity you ! I do from my heart. May God pity you too, and may you always look up to *Him* for help hereafter ! You have tried your own strength, and it has failed you entirely ; henceforth pray for, and depend upon a greater—henceforth put your temper and your passions under the government of God and religion. But I must not conceal from you,

Brockbourn, that, if the thought were true, which disturbed and agitated you so much, then all that I said to you about the unprepared state of the wretched unhappy woman will affect you with a double force. It is horror enough to think that she received her death-blow in a state of drunkenness ; if that death-blow surprised her too in the sinful gratification of lust and adultery, what is it but horror upon horror ?”

He himself was persuaded that his conjecture was right, and it was evident that the torture of his mind was now proportionably severe and terrible ; but I was not so persuaded, for being perfectly acquainted with the position of the hovel, I believed it to be absolutely impossible that a man should have come out of it, without being seen by him. So I said, “ But you were mistaken, Brockbourn ; I am confident of it. She is free, at least, from the amazing and intolerable load of guilt which must needs press down to eternal ruin a sinner summoned away in the midst of an adulterous act. No, no, this was not so. Depend upon it, it was your own error. You were suspicious and jealous ; she had given you reason to be so ; but your suspicions and your jealousy, and all your jaundiced senses and faculties were at once let loose in a most unfortunate moment ; you were intoxicated and enraged, so you rushed on blind and headlong. Ah ! it was God’s judgment upon you ; and it was a tremendous judgment, but not a final one ; it may yet save your soul !”

I had now exhausted myself in every way, and I had agitated the man to the very utmost verge of endurance. I determined, therefore, to break up the

conversation here. In the cool moments of reflection, if there were any thing more proper to be said or done, I trusted that I should discover it; and I had already taken measures for seeing him again. So I said, "Brockbourn, I have done, and I will now send you away, but first we will pray together."

In an instant, and before I had thought of looking for a prayer-book, he was down upon his knees, with every token of humility, devotion, and penitence. I was deeply struck, and I paused for a while, beholding this striking spectacle with awe and with gratitude; then I prayed silently, that God would both teach him how to pray, and also bless his prayer. After which, almost involuntarily, and without knowing it, (so quickly and so forcibly did that beautiful and divine parable present itself to my thoughts,) I began thus: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a Publican;" and whilst I stood over him I repeated it by recollection to the end. When this was done, I knelt down myself by the side of him, with a prayer-book in my hand, and read the commination-psalm, omitting the fourth verse as well as the two last; but the verse in which the penitent, dejected monarch supplicates to be delivered from blood-guiltiness, a verse which I never used on other occasions, I used now with a solemn emphatic fervency. I heard Jacob Brockbourn's sobs—his face was hid with his hands. I next read the second commination-prayer, with such alterations as made it a personal prayer of mine for *him*. The benediction at the end of that service concluded my performances and intentions.

He rose soon after me, and, without giving him time to speak, I beckoned to him with my finger, and being desirous not to expose him to the curiosity and the gaze of the servants, I dismissed him myself through the front-door.

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### CHAPTER III.

## THOMAS AND MARGARET TURNER-- THE EUCHARIST.

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### § 1. *The Turners.*

WHEN Thomas Turner began to fear for his life, the apothecary shaking his head doubtfully, and his disorder, mixed apparently of asthma and consumption, gaining ground daily, he sent for *me*. I had lately missed him in my parish walks, but I was ignorant of his sickness. He was one of that numerous class so often described, who seem to live without a God in the world ; at church he was never seen, nor did he listen to me effectually when I invited him again and again to come there. This surprised me the more, because his behaviour towards me, and indeed towards every body, was remarkably civil and proper in all respects ; and whenever I wanted any thing done in the way of his business, I always employed him. He kept carts and horses, and was pretty constantly occupied in carrying gravel, and turf, and peat-earth, and whatever else was necessary for our gardens, as well as in removing furniture and all sorts of goods backwards and forwards, to and from the neighbouring town. Being paid for these services in ready money, he generally had it at command ; and, as I was sorry to find upon enquiry, he spent daily a large proportion of it at the alehouse. In short, he had the bad reputation of being a drunken fellow ; but even in his cups he never forgot his natural civility ; every

body called him a good-natured, harmless man, an enemy to none but himself; not very wise in the abstract, and totally unable to resist the powerful temptation of having money in his pocket.

Such was Thomas Turner; but it is time to introduce his wife Margaret to the notice of the reader, especially as she is destined to hold the most prominent part in this dialogue. She had much more sense and understanding than her husband, and was in truth naturally very shrewd and clever. She was honest, too, in her transactions, at least so I believed when I became first acquainted with her; but she was fond of a dram, to which those transactions gave her too strong an inclination. She was up often in the middle of the night, and away to the fish-market, without any regard to weather; and then in her cart she retailed her purchases all around the neighbourhood; and if any thing remained she carried it about near home upon her head. With equal industry and early rising, she sometimes frequented the vegetable market, and with equal results. These exertions and constant exposure, be the barometer or thermometer what they might, together with the not immoderate use of gin, had as yet produced no apparently bad effect upon her health; she was forty years of age, and fair and fat withal. She was well spoken besides; but not naturally and constitutionally as her husband was; it suited her to be so, and she was worldly wise, and knew very well what it suited her to be. But woe betide those who provoked her, for nature had given her a great volubility of tongue, and the markets had taught her to arm it with the bitterest language and the most virulent abuse.

Such was Margaret Turner; and, like her husband, she was totally negligent of public worship.

But, in this state of imminent danger in which he now lay, some religious thoughts obtruded themselves upon both of them; their minds misgave them a little, and they doubted whether they had been pursuing a safe system, so I was called in to quiet them, if I could.

The poor man seemed sadly reduced, and in the last stage of his earthly existence. He was propped almost upright in bed by various contrivances, but still he could scarcely breathe, and was consequently incapable, or very nearly so, of any conversation with me at all. Under these circumstances, seating myself on a chair by the bed-side, I could only speak to him generally in a continued discourse, without requiring specific answers, and indeed without putting the greater part of what I said into the form of questions; but first I read to him the exhortation in our service, and having paused for a few moments, according to my usual practice, when I had finished the passage about the future reckoning, and the necessity of self-examination to prepare for it, which drew tears from his eyes; I then enlarged upon all the points of his misconduct with which I was acquainted, and upon all the aggravations of it, and my wishes seemed to be fulfilled. His countenance, his gestures, and the few words which he was able to utter, betokened the consciousness of sin, sorrow, and shame for the commission of it, and the desire of making his peace with God. Upon this I opened to him the Christian scheme of reconciliation through him who died for sinners; he was not entirely ignorant of the extent of it before, but now for the first time he appeared to lay hold of it, as his great sheet-anchor, and firmly to believe, and put his whole trust, in the Saviour himself.

Thus far therefore I had advanced, as I supposed, very prosperously ; and the next step which I took, to all appearance, succeeded equally well. The prayers in our visitation service were sufficiently adapted to his case, and I read two or three of them, which he accompanied with his tears, and he never omitted to bow at the name of the blessed Jesus. I thought it proper, therefore, now to mention the sacrament, for which he seemed fit in one great particular at least, and of which the delay might be dangerous : but he declined it at once, and as decisively as could well be done, both in tone and manner, by a person who could scarcely speak or breathe. So I turned to his wife, and asked her if she knew the reason of this conduct, which appeared to *me* so strange and unaccountable. "O yes, Sir," she answered, "I know the reason very well ; it is not for such people as we are to take the sacrament ; we are not fit for it ; it is only for those who are out of the way of temptation, and who have no trouble to get their living."

This speech of Mrs. Turner's included a great many things, and I paused for a moment to consider what might be the best method of taking up the subject. At length I enquired, whether she thought that it was quite optional with all of us to receive the sacrament, or not ; so that we might neglect it, if we pleased to do so, without making God angry with us, or forfeiting his favour. From her reply to this question I collected, that she did not go quite to the extent of considering it a mere optional thing with all people, so that it might be entirely and universally laid aside ; but at all events she seemed to think, that the great mass might safely neglect it, whilst the few,

who had nothing to do but to read their Bibles, and go to church, might perhaps be bound to attend to it. "Now then, tell me," I said, "what is your opinion about the eighth commandment? Do you suppose, that some men are bound by that commandment to refrain from stealing, and others not; or, that it binds us all to refrain?" "It binds us all, certainly, Sir," she answered. "Then you think," I said, "that the command to take the sacrament is of a different kind from the command to be honest?" Here she hesitated a little, and at length asked me, if there were any such command to be found in the Scriptures? "Undoubtedly," I said. "When Jesus Christ presented the bread and wine to his disciples, that they might eat and drink, he bid them do *this* in remembrance of *him*." "Yes, Sir," she replied, "*that* is very true; and I see plainly enough, that his disciples were bound, as long as they lived, to keep up the memory of him in this manner; but I do not see that all people are commanded to do it." "Why," I said, "the reason of the thing extends to us all alike. Upon giving them the bread, he told them that it was his body which was broken for them; and upon giving them the cup, he said, drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for *you* and for many, for the remission of sins. Now, here you are informed that his blood was shed for many others besides the disciples; and what do you think of his body? Do you think that it was broken on the cross for the disciples alone?" "No, indeed," she answered, "I am not so ignorant." "Very well then," I said, "you will probably allow, upon second thoughts, that at least all those who are to profit by his death, and obtain

the forgiveness of their sins in consequence of it, are bound by the command to keep up for ever that sort of memorial of him." "It looks like it, indeed," she replied. "Certainly, it does," I said; "and it appears to *me* also, that they who do not keep up this memorial of his death, virtually abandon of their own accord all right and title to the forgiveness of sins which his death was intended to procure." "*That* would be a very serious matter, indeed," she answered, doubtingly. "Well, but," I said, "this at least stands to reason, does it not, that they who will not preserve the appointed remembrance of a person, or thing, will come afterwards with a very bad grace to ask for some great benefit, which is only to be had by that person, or thing, and which is the very cause of appointing the remembrance to be preserved?"

Here she seemed to be somewhat shaken, and did not attempt to speak; so I continued. "In point of fact, Jesus Christ died for the whole world; all mankind, therefore, are equally interested in his death; they stand equally in need of it; and therefore they are equally bound to keep up that memorial of it, which he himself appointed; and consequently the command is addressed to us all, when he said, upon presenting the cup, do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of *me*. This is proved, too, by the practice of the first Christians. Give me your Bible, and I will shew you what that practice was." There was no Bible, as there should have been, in the sick room, but she was not without one in the house, and after a short delay she brought it to me. I then pointed out to her the several passages which speak of their breaking bread from house to house, and of their continuing steadfastly in the doctrine and fel-

lowship of the Apostles, and in breaking of bread and in prayer. From the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles I turned to the eleventh of St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, where that Apostle gives directions about this sacrament, and finds fault with an improper administration of it; but I read only as much as was sufficient to establish the fact, that wherever the Christian religion was settled, the ceremony of the Lord's Supper was ordained also, and enjoined upon all Christians alike. Afterwards, however, I dwelt a little upon the circumstances of St. Paul, to shew her the importance of the ceremony, as well as the certainty that it was intended to be universally adopted. "St. Paul," I said, "was not present when our blessed Lord instituted the holy rite, nor did he first learn any thing about it from those who were. It was made known to him by our Lord himself. His expressions to the Corinthians are these: 'I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto *you*, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread,' and that he spoke such and such words, and did such and such things. Now then, I ask you, Mrs. Turner, what was the use of Christ's appearing miraculously to St. Paul, to tell him all the history of the first institution of the Sacrament, if it were not to be established every where, and were not besides a matter of general importance to us all? That the Apostle so understood it is plain by his conduct."

Mrs. Turner was silent for some time, and seemed to be quite unable to controvert my position; but at length recurring in her thoughts to what I had said about the eighth commandment, she answered, that notwithstanding all this, she could never bring her-

self to suppose, that we were under the same obligation to take the Sacrament, as we were to keep our hands from picking and stealing. "For you know, Sir," she added, "we could not go on at all, if we were to rob one another every day as we pleased; but we may be very good men and women, as far as I can see, without the Sacrament; and the world perhaps would go on just as well without any Sacrament at all."—"Then do you think," I said, "that you are at liberty to make a distinction in the divine commands, and to pick and choose out of them, and obey only those of which you understand the use, and neglect the rest, or at least consider them to be less binding upon you?"

Here she hesitated; so I continued. "My opinion is this. Be the command what it may, if it come from God, we have nothing to do but obey. If we understand the use of the command, it is very well; but if not, still we must obey, or submit to the consequences; and we may depend upon it that God will punish a wilful disobedience even of the least, or the most unintelligible, of his commands; and the more severely, if we should presume to argue that they are useless, or of little consequence. What would you say to your children, if they should refuse to obey any command of yours, and tell you that they did not see any use in obeying you in that particular instance?"—"Why," she exclaimed eagerly, "I should box their ears well;" and then, suddenly recollecting herself, she added, "but I should never order them to do anything useless, or unnecessary."—"Oh! then," I said, "you are wiser than God; you never order anything useless or unnecessary, but God does! And so God has no right to punish the



neglect of some of *his* commands, but you may punish the neglect of any of *yours*!" This brought the colour into her face; but still she persisted in asserting, that she saw no use in the Sacrament, although it might be a divine command. "Never mind *that*," I rejoined. "The right conduct for *us* is to obey, and to leave the use to God; and then, no doubt, he will find some way of making our humility and faithfulness very useful to us, and of rewarding us for those virtues beyond anything that we can now imagine. And do you not think that many things may be useful to you, without your knowing how, and when?" She looked doubtfully; so I asked her, if parents did not continually order their children to do things, which they knew would be very useful to them, but which the children themselves thought to be only troublesome, or painful? She could not deny it. "So then," I said, "the superior understanding may see a use, when the inferior sees none. And is not *our* understanding as far below the understanding of God, as the understanding of a child is below that of the parent?" She supposed it was. "Well then," I said, "if this be so, it would clearly be better for us, to consider God as the wisest and best of parents, and ourselves as his children; whom he would train up to goodness and happiness; and in consequence to imitate the humbleness and the docility of children; obeying his will in everything, without contradiction or cavil, and without foolishly presuming that we know more than *he* does of our own wants and necessities. But, after all, am I to be understood, as if I allowed, that we could not discover any use in this Sacrament? Far from it. The uses are both many and great. One has been already

mentioned, or at least implied; a use which the blessed author of the Sacrament himself pointed out; the keeping up the remembrance of his death. And St. Paul says, 'When ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.' It is to his death we owe everything of the utmost moment to us, and therefore it should be as often as possible in our thoughts, and so represented as to make an awful impression upon us. It would not do to leave this to every man's private meditations; we should soon forget it altogether, or cease to think of it, or think of it ineffectually. Some rite, some ceremony, some sensible token is absolutely necessary to keep up a due feeling of it; and this therefore, no doubt, was one reason why the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was appointed, for our sakes, by a wise and merciful God; and by St. Paul's expression, *till he come*, you may see plainly enough, that the same Sacrament is intended to continue as long as the world itself endures."

Mrs. Turner made no attempt to speak in reply to this. It was too evident, that she was determined not to be convinced; and that the removal of the objections which she had brought forward, although it had silenced her for the present, had not gone to the bottom of her real difficulties. Something, or many things, perhaps, were still behind, which as yet she did not choose to mention; so I addressed myself to her sick husband. "You have heard," I said, "no doubt, all that has passed in conversation between your wife and myself. The ordinance of the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, as you now understand, is enjoined alike to us all for ever, and it has at least one manifest and striking use;

namely, to preserve in the mind a lively recollection of that which is so important to us, as to exceed all possibility of being properly valued. Of this ordinance you have never partaken in the days of your health and strength, although instituted by your blessed Saviour himself, and for so gracious a purpose, that even gratitude, if no other motive, should have led you to be in the constant practice of it. By the will of others, you have entered into covenant with him at your baptism; but you have never shewn, by your own will, and by coming to his holy table, that you wish to be considered as remaining in that covenant, and abiding by it; as cherishing a grateful memory of his sufferings and death for you; or as claiming any interest and share in the benefits and blessings which he purchased for you at so dear a cost to himself. Hitherto, I say, you have neglected this ceremony, which is almost your only Christian badge; but it is now brought forcibly to your thoughts by my ministrations, and it is still in your power to perform it. God graciously spares your life, as it should seem, for this very end. You are, as it appears to *me*, and I believe that you have the same opinion yourself, in imminent danger of death; and, consequently, it is quite uncertain, how long that power may be indulged to you; but most probable that the indulgence will be short. At the same time, I see nothing to deter you from this great duty; unless indeed you have been guilty of some heinous crime, for which you refuse to ask forgiveness, and which you are resolved to repeat, if opportunities should recur; and unless there still rankles in your breast some deeply rooted feeling of malice and hostility towards any of your fellow-men, who, like yourself,

are but dust and ashes. Were this so, then indeed I would say, receive not this holy Sacrament with such an unholy mind ; but I would say also, will you die thus ? Alas ! alas ! if you are in that state you are not fit to die ; nor will this Sacrament make you so."

In speaking this I had assumed a very grave and solemn tone, as the subject naturally suggested to me. It thrilled the sick man with awe ; he trembled exceedingly, and seemed anxious to say something ; but his agitation suppressed his voice. Upon this his wife interposed, and assured me, that there was not a single human being against whom he bore any malice, and that he had never been guilty of any sin that she knew of, except one. " And to be sure, Sir," she added, "*that* sin has sorely beset him ; I cannot deny it. He has been sorry for it every morning, and returned to it every evening. It is likely enough, that he may be more sorry for it now than he has ever been before ; but still, from past experience, I should fear, that, if he were to recover, he would fall into the snare again. If I were quite sure that he was going to die, I would advise him to take the Sacrament." " Yes, yes," said the poor man himself, faltering, and scarcely articulate, " if I were to take it, and afterwards recover, I should never forgive myself, or be at peace any more."

Well, thought I secretly, this is a most extraordinary case ; how am I to understand it ? Has the wretched man absolutely determined in his own mind, if God should spare his life, to return to the very sin which has stirred up the divine anger against him, and put his life in jeopardy ? To explore this matter to the bottom, if possible, I said, " It has not pleased God to bless you with the free use of your

speech, but you hear readily and distinctly whatever is spoken by others; listen therefore, whilst I talk to your wife, and only stop us when you differ from us. You are afraid, Mrs. Turner, that if your husband recovers, he will relapse into his habits of drinking; and he seems to have the same fear himself, or rather to be quite sure of it. Now I ask you, if he recover, not having taken the Sacrament, and relapse into drunkenness, will he be at peace in his own mind, as he appears to insinuate that he shall be?" "No, Sir," she answered, "he does not mean *that*; for he has always been troubled in his conscience about it; but he means that it will be a more dreadful thing for him to commit the same sin after taking the Sacrament, and that his trouble will be greater than ever." "Well, then," I said, "what counsel would you give him in respect of this sin? Here he is lying under God's mighty avenging hand in consequence of it. He has made resolutions against it continually under other circumstances; but they were not strong enough, and have always failed him. Would not you advise him to make still stronger resolutions, if he could do so?" She granted it. "And do you not also think," I inquired again, "that God himself, having inflicted this blow upon him, both wishes and expects him to make stronger resolutions?" "No doubt of it, Sir;" she replied. "Then, if he *does* make such resolutions," I said, "God will be pleased with him now, will he not, whatever may come afterwards?" "It should seem so, indeed, Sir," she answered. "And ought he not," I asked, "to be better satisfied and more at peace with himself, if he does the best that he can; that is, if he makes the best and strongest

resolutions in his power?" She allowed it readily. "On the contrary," I said, "if he forbear to make such resolutions, in this great extremity, when God presseth him sore, and yet should recover, and then relapse into his sin; would he not have greater reason to reproach himself, and to affirm, that he could never forgive himself for having neglected to take the most effectual step for his own security?" "It is true enough, Sir," she answered.

Having advanced so far, and the sick man having assented by his silence, I suddenly turned my argument to bear upon her, and enquired, if she did not think, that so awful a ceremony as the Sacrament, and one which they both of them seemed to dread so much, would not produce the strongest resolutions of amendment beforehand, and be most likely to bind them to maintain and execute those resolutions afterwards; so that a person who did not receive the Sacrament could by no means be considered as having tried the most effectual remedy for his errors, but on the contrary, as having wilfully abstained from trying it, even when urged by his afflictions, and exhorted by his minister, to do it. The earnestness of my manner in pronouncing this, and the cogency of the argument itself, appeared to alarm her excessively, and almost to compel her to yield; but after a while her natural shrewdness returned, and being still determined, if possible, to escape, she replied, that she had known several persons who had taken the Sacrament, and were after all no better than their neighbours; so that it had been no help to them whatever. "Well," I said, "*that* may be true enough; but they might not have taken it with the same views, or under the same impressive circumstances that your hus-

band would take it now ; and therefore, the cases ought not to be compared together. But how could it possibly be known, that it had been no help to them whatever ? They might be no better than their neighbours, and not so good as they should be, and yet much better than they would themselves have been without it. However, the natural tendency of the Sacrament is to be useful to us ; and if it fail in some instances, ought it to be rejected in all, or in any others ? Is not bark a good medicine for the ague ?" She allowed it. " Does it not fail now and then ?" I asked. " It does, certainly," she answered. " Then I suppose," I said, " you would advise the doctors to lay it aside for ever ?"

She saw the absurdity of this, and began to be very uneasy, but remained silent ; so I endeavoured to gain ground in this manner. " If a person receives the Sacrament hypocritically, to set himself off in the eyes of men, or to curry favour with his superiors, it is not likely that God will prosper the deed ; to such a person, acting with such a view, it will be a curse, and not a blessing. But, on the other hand, if a person receives it out of a principle of obedience to a divine command ; and still more, if he receives it under a lively sense of what Christ has done for him ; and further yet, if he receive it in order to bind himself by the most solemn engagement to depart from all iniquity : then, be assured he will be blessed in his deed ; God will pour out the Holy Spirit upon him, and Christ will strengthen him that he may do every thing. We see by our Bibles that the holy men were often visited from Heaven in a more especial manner when they were employed in prayer. How much more may we expect it, when we are spiritually eating

the body and drinking the blood of Christ ! He said himself, where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. And doubtless for some purposes of inestimable benefit ; to do them some essential good. What your husband wants is spiritual strength ; firmness of mind, and steadfastness of heart to cleave to his own resolves. He may have this from Christ ; the event has shewn that he will never have it from himself. But will Christ give it him, do you think, if he disobeys Christ's commands ? Is it not obedience that may expect the blessing, and further help to obey in every thing ?”

I paused here ; but she was still silent, and I hoped that I had made a sensible impression upon her, which had extended to her husband also. However, I now put the question to him directly, whether he would wish that the Sacrament should be administered to him. His answer undeceived me ; for he said with difficulty, and with much stammering, (death sitting apparently on his faded countenance,) “ I had rather wait a little longer first, if you please, Sir ;” and then he repeated the expression two or three times, “ a little longer ; a little longer, Sir.”

I was astonished and vexed at the man's folly and blindness ; but I restrained my feelings as well as I could, and merely asked him, how many days he expected to live, and how many more opportunities he expected to enjoy. Upon this his wife resumed the conversation, and said, “ He has been as ill as he is now, Sir, more than once before, and has rallied and revived. Yesterday, I think, he was even worse ; so perhaps, he is not unreasonable, Sir, in hoping that his hour is not yet come ; and by waiting he may



take the Sacrament more properly.”—“ Ah ! Mrs. Turner,” I exclaimed with earnestness, “ you are tempting God ! You are tempting God ! And I wish the event may not be the same as in the case of your poor friend Sands, the errand-man. I pressed him as I have done your husband ; and, like your husband, he depended upon a future opportunity, and a future power. But the chill hand of death was already smiting him. It was two o’clock, and I said to him, I will come again to you in an hour ; see that you are ready for me ! But the great church-bell sounded no more in his ears. I went at three, and he was a corpse. Does not this fact speak to you in thunder, as it were ? What if God, incensed at your idle excuses and delays, should say to your husband ; too, this hour shall thy soul be required of thee ; then what time wilt thou have for preparation ? ”

I was somewhat roused at the amazing perverseness and foolishness of their conduct, as it appeared to *me*, and I was beginning to assume a more authoritative and rebuking tone ; but, suddenly reflecting that it might not be right to alarm them into the fulfilment of my wishes in the case of such a duty as the Sacrament, I checked myself, and took rather a hasty leave. This they immediately interpreted as a mark of my displeasure ; and very soon Mrs. Turner came running after me, and entreated me, at her husband’s express desire, as she said, to be so kind to call upon him again another time. “ I will call,” I said, “ at your house again this very day : you may depend upon it ; but shall I find Turner alive ? ”—“ I hope you will, Sir,” she answered. “ Well ; God grant it ! ” I ejaculated with fervency, as I hurried away from her ; but, humanly speaking, I had no expectation of it.

In the evening, when it began to grow dusk, I executed my promise, and took my basket with me, that, if the poor man still existed, I might be prepared for any event. I had thought that he could not be worse, and yet alive ; but he was evidently worse, although happily in the full possession of his understanding. His cheeks had sunk ; his complexion was of a more deadly hue ; his respiration more difficult ; and, whenever he breathed, it produced a rattling sound in his throat. Yet he could speak as well as in the morning ; that is, with the same feeble, faltering, broken efforts. There were several women in the room, besides his wife, both old and young, manifestly waiting (at least so I thought) for his death, and ready to perform the last sad offices in washing and laying out his corpse. We were, therefore, as it seemed to me, on a razor's edge ; so sitting down by the sick-bed, and recurring at once to the subject with which I had left off before, I enquired whether he was now desirous of receiving the Sacrament. " Ah ! Sir," he answered, after several attempts to finish the sentence, beginning it again and again, " I shall never be worthy, or bold enough to do any such thing !"

" No, indeed," I said, surprised and mortified at his refusal, " you are not worthy, as the service itself well reminds you, to eat even the crumbs that fall from your Lord's table ; but you are under a great mistake. It is not perfection or a faultless life, which our Creator and Redeemer require of us, as the conditions of a worthy communion ; it is a contrite spirit, and, what is the natural consequence of such a spirit, a sincere wish to break our cords asunder, and to obtain strength to do it by the very means of that communion. If you are resolved to cling to your sins at any rate, it

would be a bold thing indeed to drink Christ's blood, which was shed to cleanse us from all sin ; but I can never persuade myself, that, when you look back upon your past life, having one foot in the grave, as it were, you can think it so delightful, and so worthy of a man, that you would return to it, if you could, with all your former eagerness, like the dog to his vomit, or the sow to her wallowing in the mire. Even in the days of your health, it seems, you spurned yourself for yielding such a base submission to the low beastly habit which you had contracted ; and will you love it, and pine after it now, when you have learnt, by sad experience, the fatal effects of it in this world, and dread the still greater evils, which it may bring upon you in the next ?”

The sick man was visibly moved, and would have told me, I am sure, if he had been able at that moment, that he was truly and deeply penitent ; but his wife interposed, and, putting the Prayer-book into my hands, opened at the office for the Communion, she said, “ See here, Sir ; is not this quite sufficient to alarm anybody, even a dying man ? ” And then she pointed with her fore-finger to a passage, which might well perhaps have appeared terrific to her, if taken by itself, and unexplained by Scripture, or by the following sentences. It was in the exhortation which is read to the communicants, at the time of the celebration of the holy rite ; and it states the great danger of partaking unworthily ; namely, that by such an act we are guilty of the body and blood of Christ, and eat and drink our own damnation. Having just looked at the passage, I asked her, if she had been studying the whole exhortation, or if she knew only that single sentence ; and her account of the matter was, that it had been shewn

to her a long time ago ; that she had treasured it up in her remembrance ever since ; and that she had now hunted it out, in order to prove to me, on what reasonable grounds she declined the Sacrament herself, and advised her husband to do the same. In truth it would not be amiss, if this sentence were altered a little, for the satisfaction of those who cannot investigate such matters for themselves, or who will not, or have no opportunity to consult others. They have indeed always their appointed minister to go to ; but the misfortune is, that they think they understand already, and consequently that they want no instruction.

Such was Mrs. Turner's case. For, upon questioning her still further, she said, that she could not conceive how a passage, so plain as this, could require any explanation at all ; it spoke for itself, she thought, and could have but one meaning ; the very meaning which she and her husband put upon it, and which terrified them so much. " Well," I replied, " let us see how the matter really is ; and first I will ask you, in what sense you understood the word ' damnation,' which probably alarms you most ?" " Damnation, Sir ?" she enquired with a look and tone of astonishment. " Why, has the word more senses than one ? Does it not always mean, and only mean, that we shall be punished in hell fire for ever ? Excuse me, Sir, for using such expressions ; for I cannot otherwise tell you my thoughts about it." " Certainly," I answered, " such expressions are best avoided, unless we use them with a proper feeling of their awful import ; and nothing can be so awful as the idea, of future eternal punishment in hell. But set yourself at ease ; *that* is not the meaning of

the word 'damnation,' in this passage. Even now we use the expression 'to damn,' in the sense of 'to condemn;' and I think it very probable that our forefathers used 'damnation' in the sense of 'condemnation.' But condemnation, you know, may be either in this world, and then only temporal; or in the next; and then eternal: if in this world, and only temporal, it might, perhaps, be better called a judgment; if in the next and eternal, it is properly marked by being called 'eternal condemnation.' I believe we almost always use 'damnation' now in this latter sense; but you may see for yourself, that it could not be so used in this passage, and should only be taken in its former sense: namely, as denoting the divine judgments inflicted upon us for our sins in this present world." "Can this be so, Sir?" she asked with an air of doubt. "Unquestionably," I replied. "Look here! The passage immediately following explains it at once; for it says, 'we kindle God's wrath against us; we provoke him to plague us with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death. Judge therefore yourselves, that ye be not judged of the Lord.' Damnation then, you clearly perceive, means these temporal judgments; the calamities, the sicknesses, and the deaths, which are sent upon us here, and which in fact are mercifully intended to save us from the eternal judgment and condemnation that may come hereafter, unless we avert it by repentance and faith."

Mrs. Turner betrayed, by her face and gesture, that she was by no means satisfied with so short an explanation upon a point, which appeared a little while ago so difficult to her, or rather so clear the other way: so I resumed my discourse in this manner. "If damnation had been intended to mean

eternal condemnation, the whole sentence would have stood most properly thus : 'the danger of receiving the Sacrament unworthily is great ; for by doing so, we kindle God's wrath against us, and provoke him to afflict us in various ways ; nay, what is far worse, we even eat and drink our own damnation.' First come the temporal judgments, and then the eternal one ; this is correct, and forcible ; but it would be a very faulty construction to put the eternal judgment before the temporal ones. Besides, do you think, that they who are not moved by the threat of the eternal judgment, if it stood first, would be moved by the threat of temporal evils coming in the second place ? No ! no ! The whole must be understood precisely as if it stood thus : By eating and drinking unworthily we provoke God to condemn us ; that is, to visit us in his anger with afflictions, and even death ; therefore, to avoid this, we should previously examine ourselves well, and pass the sentence of condemnation upon ourselves for our own faults ; repenting of them with sincerity, and resolving, with God's help, to forsake them. Believe me, this is all that is meant."

Still Mrs. Turner shook her head, and would not be convinced ; because, I believe, so far from wishing for conviction, she feared it, as men fear things in the dark, even where there is no danger. So I said (but for her husband's sake), "Are you aware, that this expression is taken from the same chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, out of which I read you some passages this morning ?" She replied that she was not. "But supposing it to be so," I said, "should you not think, that the expression must be understood in the same sense in the Liturgy

as it is in St. Paul?"—"Yes," she answered, "it seems proper enough."—"Without doubt," I said; "for it would make a strange confusion, if we used St. Paul's own word in a different sense from what he did himself, whilst we are speaking upon the same subject. So I will read what St. Paul says." When I had done this, she made no difficulty in granting, both that the Liturgy had borrowed from the Apostle, and that the sense of the Apostle must be the sense of the Liturgy.

"Very well then," I rejoined, "now observe; the phrase is, 'he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself; for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep;' that is, in other words, many persons are affected with diseases, and even death, because they eat and drink so unworthily as in a manner to compel God, if he would save them, to chastise them first by temporal worldly judgments. These judgments, therefore, alone are the damnation here spoken of. And mark the 32nd verse, which tells us, that when God chastises us thus for eating and drinking unworthily, whereby we eat and drink our own damnation, he does it that we should not be condemned with the world. Now to be condemned with the world means to be condemned eternally; and therefore the punishment, signified by damnation, being intended to save us from the eternal one, cannot be that eternal one itself. The reason of the thing shews you this; but I will inform you besides, what you must receive, however, entirely upon my authority, that the Apostle's own Greek word, which in English is called damnation in the 29th verse, is of the same kind with that used in the 31st and 32nd, where he

speaks of our being judged. Now see what those verses mean. 'If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.' This has been explained already, and nothing can be plainer. The being judged, is the being punished or afflicted in this world. What do you think of it now, Mrs. Turner?"

"Indeed, Sir," she answered, "I hardly know what to think; but I suppose it must be as you say."—"It cannot be otherwise," I rejoined; "and I will tell you another thing very much to the purpose. The word 'damnation' in the 29th verse, and the word 'condemnation' in the 34th, are one and the self-same word in St. Paul's own language. In the time of our forefathers, therefore, they had both, as I mentioned before, the same meaning; and neither of them in this place means eternal condemnation, or damnation in hell. If St. Paul were to be done into English now, we should not use either damnation or condemnation to give the sense of his word, but some expression which would shew that the threatened judgment was only temporal. But perhaps you will ask me about the word 'condemned' in the 32nd verse, how that stands in St. Paul; whether it be a word of the same sense with the others, or not; I tell you then that it is a different word, and has a much stronger sense in its own nature; and accordingly you observe that it is used here so strongly as to mean eternal condemnation."

When I had gone through these matters again and again, till she perfectly comprehended the whole argument; to accomplish which end it was absolutely necessary to read all the verses to her a dozen times



at the least, she was shrewd enough to make an observation, which, to a scholar, is very obvious; namely, that whoever they were that did it, they did very ill to give the same English word for two different words of two different meanings in the Apostle, and also two English words for one and the same of his.

"It is very true," I said; "this passage was not sufficiently considered perhaps. They did extremely well in general; so well indeed, that nothing could be better; but now and then not so well, which is the case here. And if you should ask me, whether it would not be a good thing to translate all the Scriptures over again, in order to correct everything doubtful, or ill done before, I would answer, probably not. For which opinion I have many reasons, but I will mention only one; that new translations have been often attempted of various parts of the Bible; and that where one passage has been done better, ten have been done worse, than the translation in present use. So we must be content as we are; and if the unlearned and ignorant would but come constantly to Church they would hear all these things explained from the pulpit by their Ministers. This very passage of St. Paul I have myself explained in my discourses over and over again, till the regular attendants are perhaps wearied with it; but the absentees remain of course in the same darkness and ignorance."

Here Mrs. Turner was conscience-stricken, and blushed. She was assailed, as it were, by a side-wind, and quite unexpectedly; but she soon escaped, or endeavoured to do so, by reverting to the point at which we had arrived in expounding the Apostle's

doctrine. "Well, Sir," she said, "if this frightful word damnation does not mean, after all, what I supposed, yet it seems that it means something bad enough to trouble us in this world ; and why therefore should we expose ourselves of our own accord to God's anger, and provoke him to plague us with divers diseases and sundry kinds of death ?"—"Do you assume then," I enquired, "that he will not be angry with you if you disobey his command ?" She was silent ; so I continued thus. "No doubt he will be angry with us, if we disobey him by refraining from the Sacrament ; and he will be angry with us also, if we take the Sacrament unworthily. What are we to do then ? Why, to take the Sacrament worthily, to be sure ; *that* is what we have to do. And why should we not try to take the Sacrament worthily ? Must we not try to die worthily ?" "We must indeed," she said. "Well then," I proceeded, "is the preparation for communicating worthily more difficult than, or different from, the preparation for a worthy death ?" She was unwilling to answer ; so I asked her, whether we could die worthily without repentance, without good resolutions in our hearts, without charity towards all men. She allowed that we could not. But these same things," I said, "are also necessary to a worthy communion. Is it not ridiculous therefore to abstain from the Sacrament for fear of taking it unworthily, when a worthy participation of it requires no more than a worthy death ? And die we must, whether we will or not ; nor do we know how soon ! We may die, all of us, this very moment ; any delay therefore of repentance may cost us our salvation ; in short, it concerns us infinitely to be always in a state of repentance, and

then we shall be always fit both for the Sacrament and for death. And now mark this ; by refraining from the Sacrament, we are guilty of positive sin ; for all disobedience is sin. On the other hand, by receiving the Sacrament, in the first place we obey God's will, and *that* is so far well ; and in the second place it is by no means certain, that we shall receive unworthily. The fear that we *may* do so is, perhaps, only a proof of our own humility : and if that be the case, depend upon it, that God will be pleased instead of being angry with us, and will bless every imperfect endeavour of ours to serve *them* ; and will give us grace to go on from strength to strength ; and will make the holy elements of bread and wine, which represent the body and blood of our crucified Redeemer, the true and efficacious food to nourish us up to everlasting life." I should perhaps have paused here ; but scarcely had I finished the last sentence, when the poor sick man himself exclaimed, with a wonderful energy and devotion, at the same time clasping his hands together and raising them upwards, " Oh ! the blessed Sacrament ! Oh ! the blessed Sacrament ! I long for the bread of life ! Give me the bread of life ! " Every countenance was fixed upon him with surprise. They were astonished, I believe, both at the power with which he spoke, and still more at the change of his opinion, and the eagerness with which he now called for what he had before rejected. I was surprised too, but I was also delighted ; and immediately turning to his wife, I said, " You, I presume, after the instruction which you have just had, will be glad to receive the Sacrament in company with your dying husband." At once her eyes fell to the ground, unable to sustain the piercing look of

mine ; she was ashamed, and she was dismayed ; but, at length raising them again with some apparent timidity, she answered, " If you will excuse me, Sir, I had rather not." " But will the great God excuse you ?" I exclaimed with a tone perhaps somewhat too severe. " Will *He* excuse you, whose body and blood you prize so little, or dread to taste with such a superstitious fear ? And what must be the feelings of your poor husband, lying in this piteous state, on the very verge of the next world, and hungering and thirsting for that which alone may strengthen and support him under the last shock of leaving this ?" " Will you not give it to him, Sir," she enquired tremblingly, " unless I receive it with him ?" " Undoubtedly," I said, " there is no absolute necessity for *him* that *you* should receive it with him. There should be two communicants besides himself ; some of these persons probably will be glad of the opportunity ; I will ask them, since *you*, his wife, refuse."

No sooner had I uttered these words than they began to slink away down stairs, some secretly and without making any observation, others upon various pretences. There remained, however, two, one very young, and the other as old ; and these, I have no doubt, from the sequel, would have escaped too if they had been able. But the young woman was at that moment engaged in wiping the mouth of the poor sufferer, and in chasing away the flies which buzzed about his face, and were continually settling upon it, and tormenting him. The old one was sitting down, on the farther side of the sick-bed, at a great distance from the door ; and she was very lame besides. Immediately I addressed the young woman who was close to me. " Are you ready," I

said, "my good young woman, to perform this kind office for the dying man? You seem very desirous to make his last moments as free from all uneasiness and pain as you can. But cleansing his poor lips, and driving away these troublesome insects, what a mighty little service is it, in comparison of enabling him to receive the Sacrament! Yours is the service of but a few hours at the longest, and only affects his body; if he were to eat the flesh and drink the blood of his Redeemer in a worthy manner, of which there is every likelihood, if he do it at all, his soul may be saved for ever, and his body may rise from the grave to life and happiness eternal in the heavens."

"Ah! Sir," she cried, bursting into tears, "he is my father; I would do anything for my father but this; I cannot do this." "Your reason?" I asked. "I am not good enough," she answered. "And have you no wish to be better?" I enquired. "Yes, Sir," she replied, "I wish so, often and enough, if *that* would do." "And sometimes," I said, "you resolve perhaps that you will try seriously to become better?" "*That* I do, too," she answered; "but my resolutions fail me, when I come to the point." "And then," I said, "you are sorry afterwards, I suppose; sorry that you break your resolutions; sorry that you offend God by doing so; sorry that you are not so good as you would wish to be, and as he expects you to be!" "Yes, Sir," she replied; "*that* is my feeling." "But," I said, "you do not mean, I presume, to go on all your life in this manner; sorrowing, and resolving, and failing; then pursuing the same round again, and never coming to any useful conclusion?" "No, indeed, Sir," she

answered; "when I am older, and have less to disturb me, I will set about it with more spirit, and more steadiness." "Then you are sure, are you," I said, "that you shall live to be older?" She paused, and at length replied, "We are none of us sure of *that*, Sir." "But," I said, "you mean to act, it seems, as if you were sure." Upon this she was silent, and I continued thus—"Suppose, however, that God should be so gracious, as to let you live till you are an old woman, do you think that you should have more spirit and strength when old, than you have now? *That* is by no means usual, but the very contrary; and I should fear, that by *that* time your habits would be so confirmed, as to require far more strength of mind and spirit to shake them off, than they require now; so that your difficulties would be greater, and your means of overcoming them less. Consider, therefore, whether your plan be a wise one."

She was still silent; so I said, "I suspect that you think it will be an easy matter to lay aside, when you are old, all the faults for which old age will have no relish; but then can you flatter yourself, that God will be satisfied with your committing those faults as long as they give you pleasure, and leaving them off only when you care no more about them? Be assured, he will not; and I will mention another thing to you, of which you do not seem to be aware. You can do nothing at any time, young or old, without his grace to help you; and I should fear, that the longer you forbear to ask him for it, and to use it, the less likely he will be to grant it to you at the last; or when you yourself may wish for it. Nay, he might determine with respect to *you*, as he did with

respect to the Jews, to limit the day of grace. 'To-day,' he might say, 'if you will hear my voice, harden not your hearts; behold, now is the appointed time; now is the day of salvation.'

The young woman being unable, or not disposed to controvert any of these arguments, made no attempt to say anything at all; so recollecting her insinuation, that there were many things which disturbed the peace of her mind, and wishing to leave no part of her case without an observation upon it, I asked her what those things were. "Why, Sir," she answered, "I have quarrelsome neighbours, and rude children; and they provoke me sometimes to use improper language; and I could not take the Sacrament, whilst I am subject to this." "What?" I said; "although so young, you are a mother; and are you like one of those thoughtless and wicked mothers, whom I often hear in their ungovernable fury, pouring out curses upon their children? God forgive you! if you are; but first may he open your eyes to see and understand the horrible sinfulness of such conduct. A mother cursing her own children! It is too horrible."

Her agitation bespoke her guilt; however, she disclaimed it, and asserted, that she only meant scolding and threatening when they got into mischief. "All *that*," I said, "may be perfectly proper, and is sometimes absolutely necessary. To do it, therefore, when it is proper or necessary, will not disqualify you for the Sacrament; but, on the contrary, like the performance of any other duty, it will make you the more fit. However, there is no reason for abstaining from the Sacrament, even if, in the correction of your children, you should speak unad-

visedly with your lips. If, indeed, you frequented God's holy altar with a due feeling of the awful importance of going there, God might so bless you as to enable you to curb your tongue, even were it the most unruly; and to subdue the bad passions which set it in motion, so that neither rude children, nor quarrelsome neighbours, would any more discompose your tranquillity, or extort violent words from your mouth. To be meek and humble in spirit, and, when reviled, not to revile again, this is the true Christian temper; and how you can expect to acquire that temper whilst you neglect any of the most suitable means, I cannot understand. Alas! alas! we shall be judged, I fear, both for the want of the temper itself, and for not putting ourselves in the way of acquiring it; not doing the things which are likely to draw blessings and graces after them."

The young woman held down her head, and was quite confounded; but she appeared to be as remote as ever from complying with her father's wishes and mine. At all events, I determined to press her no further. I had seen instances indeed, in which the taking of the Sacrament, suddenly and unexpectedly, by persons who might well have been supposed unfit for it, without time for more preparation than the mere utterance of a few hasty prayers, and the silent, trembling, hurried contemplation of their own defects and frailties, had been followed, nevertheless, by the happiest consequences; but I consider it an experiment too hazardous to be commonly tried, and I abandoned all thought of trying it in the present case; nor am I sure, that by any fresh arguments or reproaches, I could so far have overcome this young woman's scruples, as to induce her to



suffer it to be tried upon herself. But what was now to be done? The old woman in the corner still remained; and the sick man turned his eyes wistfully towards her, (for she was his mother,) and seemed to wonder that I should delay to invite her; so I said, "I understand you very well, my poor friend; and, as I believe you to be perfectly sincere in your desire to partake of Christ's body and blood, I will venture to waive the regulation of having two communicants besides ourselves, and to accept one only. We shall be three altogether; but a little flock, it is true; yet we may hope, that our blessed Lord (for so he has promised) will be graciously pleased to be with us. It is the best that we can do; and he will, I trust, require no more."

Thus I spoke, not doubting at that moment of the willingness of the old person to communicate with us; but I soon found that I had been reckoning without my host; for, upon going round the bed to the farther side on which she was sitting, and proposing it to her, she excused herself as the rest had done, but rather by gestures than by words; at least what she said was in so low and feeble a voice that I did not catch the purport of it. "Have you often received the Sacrament, in the course of your long life, my good old lady?" I asked. "No, Sir," she answered; "I cannot say that I have." "How many times then?" I asked again; "Ten, or a dozen times?" "Not so many as *that*, Sir," was her reply. I now began to suspect, by her uneasy manner, that she had never received it all; so I put the question directly to her, whether she had received it even once; and her answer was, (but it was drawn from her very reluctantly) that she believed

she never had. "And, pray, good Madam," I said, "how old may you be?" "Why, Sir," she replied, "I am near upon fourscore." "Ah!" I said with feeling, "*that* is a great age. Do you expect to live much longer?" "No, Sir," she answered; "I am not so unreasonable." "True," I said; "it would be very unreasonable to expect it. You remember perhaps what is said in the burial-psalm; 'the days of our age are threescore years and ten; and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow; so soon passeth it away, and we are gone!' You have been at the funerals of some of your kindred, I suppose, and have heard this forcible admonition?" "I *have*, Sir," she replied. "And have you been in the habit of attending your church on other occasions besides funerals?" I enquired. "Not of late, Sir," she answered. "I have been too infirm." "Have you ever heard, or read," I enquired again, "about old Anna the Prophetess; how she never departed from the temple of God night or day? Or about the two aged people, Zacharias and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist; how they walked in all the ordinances of the Lord, blameless?" "Yes, Sir," she said, "I have heard all about it." "And did you never wish," I asked, with a complaining tone, "or think it necessary, that you should be like these persons? Why was this conduct of theirs mentioned in Scripture, but to teach *us* how God's favour was to be obtained? Ah! my poor old creature! as it seems to *me*, you have one foot already in the grave, and yet you have made no preparation to meet *him*, who would be your Saviour

as well as your Judge, if you would let him ; but *you*, I fear, will have him only for a Judge."

This alarmed her, and she began to be in a great trepidation ; at the same time she said, that she hoped God would save her. " Why ? " I asked. " What are you doing which should encourage you to think, that God may save you ? " " He is merciful, Sir ; very merciful," she stammered out. " Yes," I said, " he is indeed ; he is so merciful, that he sent his own Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to die for us ; and whenever we are willing to accept *him* for our Saviour, and to obey his commands, which is the only sure proof of our accepting him, then he will not have died for us in vain. Do you suppose, that he died, in order to enable *us* to go on in sin and disobedience ? " She did not know what to say to this ; but at length she told me, what I had been told hundreds of times, that she was no scholar, and that she did not understand any of these things.

" The fact is," I said, " and very sorry I am to observe it, that here is a whole family, both young and old, living without God in the world ; at least without worshipping him in any of his great ordinances. It would be too painful to me, and it would require too much time, to state all the evil consequences of such conduct ; but there is one now under my eyes, which, I fear, will rise up against you all in the day of judgment. Here lies, stretched on the bed of death, a man bound to you by the closest and the dearest ties ; *you* are his wife ; *you* are his daughter ; *you* are his mother ; " I exclaimed with a tone of severe solemnity, and pointing with my forefinger to each respectively ; " and yet not one of you,

whether ignorance, or superstition, or wickedness be the cause, will unite with him to eat the holy supper of his Lord. The husband sees his wife, the father sees his daughter, the son sees his mother, all alike refusing to give him this last, this only comfort that remains to him; that he may eat the bread which came down from heaven; unite himself in close communion with his Saviour; and so die in the firm and cheering hope of dwelling with him hereafter for ever. God grant that his own wish, which is frustrated by *you*, may still be accepted as a deed above! But were he ever so sure of this, yet every thought which glances over his mind respecting you must be bitter and painful in the extreme; he must know in what peril he leaves you all; he must depart with a sad presage that he will meet you no more."

The women were deeply touched, as it seemed, with these observations and reproaches of mine; the daughter sobbed aloud; but none of them spoke, or shewed any sign of a desire to partake of the Holy Sacrament. So, being unwilling to prolong a useless conversation, which could not but agonise the dying man himself (although he was too ill to shew it in its full extent), I took him by the hand, and said, "I am truly grieved, my poor friend, that this important matter has been managed so ill. If I could but have foreseen your own wish, and the refusal of all your family to concur with you in the accomplishment of that wish, I would have taken effectual measures to gratify you. It is now too late to go out, and search for charitable people, to perform this sacred office; but if it please God to spare you till the morning, and to bless my intentions towards you, I will return, and Mrs. Warton shall

come with me, and perhaps my curate, or some other persons who are kept by a godly fear in a constant state of preparation to meet their Judge. Now farewell ; for this night at least. If we meet no more in this world, may we meet in the next !” I then pronounced over him the benediction at the end of the Visitation-service, and was about to depart ; but he still grasped my hand, and resisted the gentle attempts which I made to disengage it. He tried too to speak, but his efforts were vain ; neither his feelings nor his disorder permitting it. At length after I had kneeled down again, and repeated the short prayer which stands first in the appointed office, he appeared to be much soothed, and once more pressing my hand, he loosed it. Immediately I quitted the sick-chamber without noticing the rest, who little deserved any civility.

In the room below was assembled a knot of persons who had retreated there for refuge. They were well aware of what had passed up stairs, and seemed to be alarmed, lest the attack should be renewed upon themselves ; so one of them, in the hope, I suppose, of blunting the edge of it, began, when I was scarcely amongst them, and said, “ It is a great shame, Sir, indeed, that none of the poor man’s nearest relations will take the Sacrament with him ! I am sure, if I had known that they would have used him so, I would have prepared myself to do it.” “ What prevents you, my good lady,” I asked mildly, “ from being always prepared for such a necessary purpose ?” “ I keep a shop, Sir,” she answered : “ and many vexatious things happen in it every day. There are bad customers, and what not.” “ I do not see,” I said, still speaking with mildness, “ what the being

vexed has to do with refraining from the Sacrament. On the contrary I should have thought it one of the best reliefs from the cares and vexations of business to have had recourse to the acts and offices of religion. They who think otherwise must be far indeed from feeling and acknowledging that beautiful passage of Scripture, which asserts, that 'her ways are the ways of pleasantness, and that all her paths are peace.' Obey God in his ordinances, my good woman, and exercise a lawful trade in a lawful manner, and then he will bless all occurrences to you, whether prosperous or adverse. Your gains shall not make you covetous, or wasteful; your losses shall not impoverish, depress, or discompose you; you will see his hand in everything; you will refer everything to his providence; you will make known to him every joy, every trouble, every want; in short, he will be your God, and you will be his servant, and always ready to give an account to him. But," (for I knew her well, and was determined to strike home, keeping, however, in generals) "if tradespeople, in defiance of God's commandment, will persist in opening their shops on his holy Sabbaths, and in using scanty weights and measures, which are an abomination to him, and in adulterating their wares with deleterious substances, which is a sort of secret murder, then indeed they make themselves the servants of the Devil; and, doing his works, they are fit subjects for his kingdom of darkness and misery. To come to the Sacrament under these circumstances, and with no intention of a thorough reform, would be a sin deserving of heavy judgments indeed. No preparation, but the renouncing of such practices for ever, could be tolerated for a moment. God

would see through the closest veil of hypocrisy ; and in his sight it is all hypocrisy which makes any compromise with sin. Zaccheus must be the pattern : ‘ Behold, Lord, half my goods I give to the poor ; and if I have defrauded any man, I restore him four-fold.’ Resolve upon this, and from the same instant you are not only sufficiently prepared for the Sacrament, but may assure yourselves that salvation is come to your house.”

Here I stopped, but no one attempted to answer me. The woman who had voluntarily thrust herself forward was abashed, and gradually slunk out of sight. Her conscience, no doubt, testified powerfully against her. I passed on, but turning round at the door I gave them a few parting words. “ You all confess,” I said, “ if not openly, yet tacitly by your actions, that you deem yourselves unfit for the blessed Sacrament ; insomuch that you will suffer this poor man to die without it, rather than take it with him. Now, if you are really unfit, that very unfitness convinces you of sin ; puts you every day to the hazard of the divine judgments ; nay, exposes even your souls to a more tremendous jeopardy hereafter. Will you not, therefore, set about immediately to correct this unfitness, which is so sinful, and so dangerous both to body and to soul ? Which may ruin both for ever ? If you die in it, unquestionably you are eternally lost. And remember that no simple repentance will suit your case ; you must repent that you are unfit at this moment ; you must repent that you have been so long unfit ; you must repent of the sins which have made, and still make you so. To sin, and to continue in sin, is madness enough ; but it is an aggravation of your madness

to deprive yourselves by your sins of this blessed banquet of your Saviour's body and blood. Your repentance therefore must be deep, and sincere, and without delay. Delay will increase the anguish of it, if it is to be effectual, or will make it impossible altogether. This night your souls may be required of you ; and death with his besom of destruction may sweep you off this earthly stage at once, without notice, without summons."

Having said this I quitted the house in an instant. How they felt, or what they thought afterwards, I knew not ; but whatever I was able to do in enforcing the sentiment by tone and manner, I did it on this occasion ; and I trust that I compelled them to feel and to think seriously.

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§ 2.—*The Same.*

As I walked homewards with a slow, pensive step, (for it was a calm, still night, the busy hum of men was hushed, the moon was up in all her majesty, and the nightingale alone was awake) I ruminated on what had passed ; and when I had considered the matter in all its bearings, I concluded, that, although there might be undoubtedly a mixture of superstition in the notions which these people entertained of the Sacrament, yet they were also deterred from it by the consciousness of allowing themselves in practices, which were contrary to the law of God, and which they wanted courage to relinquish. Then came a very important question, what I was to do as the minister of a parish abounding with persons of this description ; deeply and solemnly too as I was im-



pressed with the conviction that this, as well as the other Sacrament of Baptism, was an indispensable means of salvation. Not that God could not, or would not, save any man who neglected this sacred institution (I pretend not, I presume not to limit his mercies); but such a man is not in covenant with him; or, having been admitted into covenant with him by baptism, he has virtually renounced it by not walking in the rest of God's commandments, and more especially in this ordinance of the Lord's Supper. He does *not* preserve the memory of Christ's death, till he come again, in the way that Christ himself appointed; and, as I argued with Mrs. Turner, what right can he therefore have to plead Christ's death in his own behalf? He must depend upon his own merits, or upon God's uncovenanted mercy. Let him tell me then, what he has done for God, that God should be bound to recompense him again, and to recompense him with heaven? Let him tell me also, whether it be more satisfactory to toil on through this life, with, or without, a divine promise in regard to the next? Judge ye, my readers, as wise men, what I say.

This statement brings to my recollection the case of one of my parishioners, a Mr. Bankes, long since dead, a very excellent man, and a man of some rank also, and of the highest possible estimation amongst his friends and neighbours. He did great good himself, and he enabled Mrs. Bankes to do still more; and, allowing a little for bad custom and fashion, he lived very much like a Christian, having no apparent vice, and coming regularly with his family to church. But I soon discovered that he never accompanied Mrs. Bankes to the altar; and when I would have pressed him on the subject, he

evaded all discussion upon it with so much earnestness, and with so much of a sort of nervous agitation, that I was obliged to forbear, and so I remained quite at a loss to unravel the mystery of his opinions. Once he was ill, and his life appeared to be in danger; still he was immovable with respect to the Sacrament, which I offered to administer to him in private. As before, he deprecated all argument upon the question; but one thing escaped him on this occasion, which is worthy of observation. He depended, he said, upon God's mercy, and not upon any merits of his own. It was true, he was conscious to himself, and he felt happy, in such a consciousness, that his great aim through life had been to serve his relations, friends, and neighbours, and to make all persons within the sphere of his influence as happy as he could; and in this object he had succeeded to a very great degree. Yet he assumed no desert on this account; only he threw himself on the goodness of his Creator. This was the substance of what he said, and which he repeated several times, endeavouring to place it in different lights, but making no answer whatever to any objections of mine, advanced against the validity of this doctrine when his silence permitted me to interpose. One circumstance I marked with peculiar pain, that he spoke of God's mercy generally, and not as it is manifested to the world in Jesus Christ. He never mentioned his Redeemer, or his Redeemer's merits at all.

Now, was he, or was he not, a Christian in belief, at this period of his existence? I cannot tell; and I was glad, when I reflected upon it afterwards, that I had not put the question directly to him. So far I knew that he had lived upon terms of friendship with

many persons suspected of unbelief; and he had mentioned this circumstance to me himself, but not in such a manner as to lead me to place him in the same class. I had been told also, that he sometimes said that he did not pretend to believe, or to disbelieve; and that he talked of the impossibility of believing what he could not thoroughly comprehend; but I can hardly credit this in a man of *his* understanding; the fallacy is too gross for any but the lowest intellect.

Well; in this situation of things, Mr. Bankes's third son, a fine young man of sixteen, was attacked by an uncommon disorder, but little known to the physicians; certain, as it afterwards appeared, in its results, although very lingering, and sometimes very flattering in its progress. However, at length all hope vanished; and the symptoms became painful and distressing beyond all imagination. I was once a witness to them, and the sight overwhelmed me. What must have been the feelings and sufferings of a fond father? The youth had not yet received the Sacrament. I offered it and it was accepted; and never shall I forget the terrible circumstances of the ceremony. But to have done; the father himself partook of it with streaming eyes, and an agonized heart; and, on the first Sacrament Sunday after his son's funeral, he partook of it again at the holy altar itself. Well might he have said, "it is good for me that I have been in trouble, that I may learn thy statutes; before I was troubled, I went wrong; but *now* have I kept thy word."

Reverting again to the measures which I adopted, besides conversation and preaching, for awakening and rousing my people from their carelessness and

indifference with respect to the Sacrament, and for correcting their erroneous notions of it; I dispersed amongst them various tracts, from the stores of the Christian Knowledge Society; and especially Archbishop Synge's Answer to all the Excuses of Non-Communicants; and, that I might be as little liable as possible to disappointment, in cases of emergency, when sick persons wished suddenly to communicate, and none of their own families or friends were fit, or willing to communicate with them; I mentioned the difficulty to several respectable old people, never-failing attendants at the altar, who resided in various parts of the parish, and were generally at home; and they undertook very willingly to be prepared to obey my call when I wanted them, and thus to enable me to administer the Sacrament, whenever it might be proper, or desirable to do so. There were besides some excellent young ladies, who at my desire were always ready to meet me anywhere, for the same purpose, at a moment's notice; and the good Mrs. Bolton gladly assisted me sometimes amongst the poor, both conveying me in her carriage, and sharing in the ceremony. By these arrangements, and by the help of my curates, and of Mrs. Warton, as long as her health permitted it, it never happened to me, or not more perhaps than once or twice in a great number of years, to refuse the Sacrament to anybody for lack of a sufficiency of associates, as the Rubric appoints; and I have been able to administer it three times in three different quarters on the same day; which, without such a preconcerted system, would, undoubtedly, have been quite impossible. If my associates were from amongst the poor, I gave them something for their attendance, according to the

laudable practice of the primitive Christians, out of the oblations of their richer brethren, or from the Sacrament money collected in the church. I will mention here too, that it was my practice to distribute amongst the poor communicants, in the church itself, immediately after the ceremony, a portion of the offerings just made; and I mention it, not only because the practice is good, and primitive, but also to state a necessary caution in the exercise of it; for without some caution it may very possibly be abused. What was done in early times to avoid abuse, I do not know; my caution was to distribute only amongst those, who came to the Sacrament by my express invitation, and advice. Others obtained nothing, until I was perfectly acquainted with them, or supposed myself to be so; and, if circumstances proved that I was mistaken in my opinion of them, I did not go so far as absolutely to exclude them from the Sacrament, which would have required a reference to the Bishop; but I dissuaded them from it, in such terms, as operated to the full extent of an exclusion, until they had regained my confidence, by their subsequent good conduct.

On the occasion which led to this digression, Mrs. Warton accompanied me early in the morning, (the next morning after my evening visit) to Thomas Turner's house; but we did not expect to find him alive. On our way we met the apothecary, who belonged to an adjoining parish, returning from him. I knew where he had been, and accosted him accordingly. "I have left poor Turner," he said, "this instant, almost at the last gasp. I have looked upon him as a dead man for a long time; and at length the fatal moment is come. He has been in con-

vulsions all night; but he is dying now calmly, and in his perfect senses, although speechless. If you desire to see him, with the view of doing anything for him, you have not a minute to spare."

Upon hearing this, we hastened onward as fast as we could, and soon arrived at the house. A woman there ran up stairs at once, and Mrs. Turner came down to us immediately, exclaiming, that her husband was but just alive, and was making every sign that he could, to shew his great desire of taking the Sacrament. "And I cannot think, Sir," she added, "of his taking it without *me*. If he did, he would be very uneasy, I know; and then I should be uneasy myself at the thought of having troubled him in his dying moments. But, if you will excuse me, Sir; I mean no offence; I must ask you first a question or two." "It is very late," I said, "to have questions to ask, Mrs. Turner: but Mrs. Warton will go up, and spread the napkin, and pour out the wine; so, if you are quick and short, no time will be lost."

Mrs. Warton was upon the stairs in an instant, and then the poor woman said trembling, "If I eat and drink unworthily, Sir, shall I be one of Jesus Christ's murderers? You did not explain that part to us, Sir. It seems to tell me so, and I shudder when I think about it. What is it, Sir, but this; to be guilty of the body and blood of Christ?" Thus she questioned me, and shook all the time like an aspen-leaf. I answered, "Make yourself easy, my good woman; you cannot now eat and drink unworthily, in that manner in which the Corinthians did, whom Paul reproached; but if you *could* do so, yet the threatening is nothing like what you suppose.

It is really and truly this ; that by eating and drinking the bread and wine, which represents Christ's body and blood, irreverently, and as if they were common food, you would offend against that which they represent ; your irreverence shewn to the bread and wine would not stop there (for if it did, it would certainly be of less consequence) but it would extend to Christ's body and blood ; in short, you would be considered as guilty of treating irreverently Christ himself. But is there any danger, Mrs. Turner, that *you* should eat and drink this consecrated bread and wine, these holy elements, these symbols of such awful things, as if they were common bread and wine, or simple food ; or that you should not eat and drink them with any other feeling than one of the very utmost reverence and awe ?" "No, indeed, Sir," she replied, with quickness and earnestness ; "there is no danger of it whatever ; I am too much frightened ! Let us go up, Sir ! I am quite ready."

As I mounted the stairs, followed by Mrs. Turner, the door of the bed-chamber being open in which her husband was lying, I distinctly heard the hoarse rattling in the poor man's throat, which betokened his rapidly-approaching end ; so I quickened my speed, and finding all things prepared for me, and having also ascertained the fact, that his understanding had not deserted him, I administered the holy rite. In presenting the bread I was under the necessity of putting it into his mouth myself ; and as he was sufficiently elevated for receiving the wine by the position in which his disorder had made it expedient to place him, I had only to apply the glass to his lips, his eyes he never opened, being, perhaps,

unable to do it ; his hands he was continually moving across his body towards each other, as if he would have joined them, if he could ; and at length, when it struck me that he had this intention, I placed them together with the fingers intertwined as in the attitude of prayer ; but he wanted strength to retain them in such a posture. Again and again they slipped asunder ; again and again he discovered the same wish to unite them ; and I replaced them as often. His lips meanwhile were another index of his heart ; they quivered perpetually with a manifest feeling of devotion ; nay, they sometimes evidently attempted a pious ejaculation ; but, in general, the sounds which issued were all abortive. At the end of the ceremony a beam of light seemed to dart over his countenance, and to dispel every mark of distress with which it was obscured before. It bespoke peace here ; and it augured eternal peace to come. So I then thought.

I went away with Mrs. Warton very well pleased with the whole event. Mrs. Turner too had conducted herself with great propriety ; and, what I had not observed in her before, her eyes were full of tears. The death of her husband had been so long expected, that she was quite reconciled to it beforehand ; her tears were, no doubt, for herself. She would have accompanied us down stairs, and loaded us with her thanks, but we would not permit it. The mother and the daughter did not once appear ; and all the other attendants of the sick chamber retired, when I began to administer the holy rite.

In the evening of the same day, Mrs. Turner sent me word, that her husband continued nearly in



the state in which I had left him in the morning; if there were any difference, it was for the better. This surprised me exceedingly, and the following morning I called myself, but still with no hope whatever of seeing the poor man still alive. How much then must my surprise have been increased, when I found him not only alive, but able to speak! In fact, he had enjoyed so much sound and refreshing sleep during the last twenty-four hours, that it had produced a sensible alteration in him in every way. He had besides tasted some food, and with considerable appetite and relish. The look and complexion of his countenance was no longer that of a dying man; the rattling in his throat had subsided in a very great measure; and he could now bear to be laid in a horizontal position. As soon as he saw me, the tears came into his eyes; but he said nothing. I was myself affected too; so to gain time, and to deliberate a little upon the best mode of discharging my present duty, I turned to his wife, and asked her if she had given notice to the apothecary of this wonderful change in the appearance of her husband. "I *have*, Sir," she answered; "and he has just been here; and what is more, Sir, he thinks it very likely now, that poor Turner will recover." "Whose doing then is this?" I enquired with a grave and solemn tone. "It is unaccountable;" she replied. "Is it indeed?" I thought with myself, and was grievously disappointed at her want of religious feeling, and of reference to the Almighty and merciful Father of mankind. So I turned back again to the sick-bed, and perceived to my satisfaction, a very different impression *there*. The poor man's

lips were quivering, and his whole face was convulsed; but soon, with a great effort, he stammered out, "Ah! Sir, it is God's doing and yours!"

This embarrassed me the more; but tears came to my relief, and then I said, "It is all God's own doing; and to *him* we must ascribe it all, with every possible return of praise and gratitude. If he has used *me*, in any way, as his instrument, to shew so much mercy upon you, I bless him for it. Perhaps the Sacrament——" "Yes, Sir," he cried, interrupting me eagerly, "*that is it; that is it*, Sir, indeed! It is the Sacrament which has done everything!" "What?" I said. "It removed, I supposed, a great load from your spirits, a load which you could not bear, and which was sinking you to the grave; was this, do you think, the effect of the Sacrament, that it put your mind at ease, and so worked this great improvement of your body?" "No doubt of it, Sir," he answered with devotion; "no doubt of it whatever!" "Why," I said, "it is plain enough, certainly. You had been living in the open habitual neglect of a great and awful duty; at length you fulfilled it. This is something; but this is a poor view of the matter. The duty was not a single or a simple one like any other; for it comprehended all others within itself; that is, it bound you under the most solemn resolves and vows to perform every other. And in point of fact, you *had* begun a new course; for, a sincere sorrow for the past, and a sincere resolution to do better with God's help, for the future, if your life were spared, is the beginning of a new course, and might well have the effect of lightening the burden which before oppressed you. But, besides this, by the same act you

renewed your Christian covenant with God; you acknowledged that you stood in need of, and that your only dependence was upon the body and blood of Christ, broken and shed for sinners on the cross; and, therefore, you humbly trusted, that every benefit and blessing procured by his death would be graciously extended to yourself. If these were your feelings and reasonings, the change of your spiritual circumstances was as great as any man can undergo in so short a time, and it is the less to be wondered at, that we see, in consequence, this great change of your body. For, as no bodily constitution is stout enough to endure the sad corroding effects of a wounded spirit; so will the spirit, which reposes on its Saviour, and is thus at peace with God, and itself, uphold sometimes the breaking constitution of the body. Now tell me, whether I have described your case aright; has anything of this sort occurred to you?"

"It has indeed, Sir," he replied; "the thought came into my mind, that my sins were all forgiven, and blotted out of God's book of judgment, and would never more be laid to my charge; so you must needs suppose, Sir, that when I thought *that*, I was mightily comforted. I hope I was not mistaken." "You could not be mistaken, my good friend," I said, "if you partook of the Sacrament worthily. In *that* case the forgiveness of sins follows it as a matter of course; and, I believe, you know now very well what is meant by 'worthily.' In fact, as I have told you, in the strict sense we are all unworthy; but the degrees of unworthiness are very unequal and different; and there are some degrees of it, which do not disqualify us from coming to the

Lord's Supper. A person coming to it, impenitent at the time, and without any desire or intention of future penitence, is the most unworthy of all comers. His object must be some worldly interest, or to shew his contempt of the holy elements. Such a person eateth and drinketh at the hazard of a tremendous divine chastisement. On the other hand, a person coming to the Lord's Supper, with a penitence however imperfect, but with a penitence which has really begun; which the communicant desires, and intends to continue and increase; and which he trusts, that this very Sacrament will both bind and enable him to bring to perfection; such a person may safely come, and he will be most wise in doing so. The apostle's threat affects him not; he will receive worthily, although much and great unworthiness still hangs about him. You, I think, and still more, perhaps, your wife, are in this class. She has not had occasion to prepare herself for the sacred rite as *you* have; and she has been somewhat hurried in order to accompany *you* in the celebration of it; but she has now leisure for reflection, and she may make *that* more perfect which was less so, by getting more knowledge, and by a daily attention in future to all the duties of piety and religion. You too, my good friend, should God indeed prolong your life, and restore your health, must take care that your future deeds correspond to your present thoughts; and then assure yourself, that in taking the Sacrament you have fed upon Christ; have eaten Christ's flesh, in such a manner as to unite yourself with him in the closest communion, and thereby to gain your ultimate end, heaven."

When I stopped, Mrs. Turner immediately ex-

pressed a hope for her husband and herself, that God would give them his grace to finish the good work which they had now so happily begun ; " but all that, Sir," she said, " about eating Christ's flesh, and feeding upon him, is what I cannot understand." " Then," I said, " you are in the same situation with the Jews, to whom Christ himself used that language ; but, I hope, you will not imitate their conduct. They were puzzled very much, and asked one another, ' How can this man give us his flesh to eat ? This is a hard saying ; who can bear it ? ' That is, who can understand and admit it ? So they left him, and attended upon him no longer. And I must tell you, my good Mrs. Turner, that there were some people in later times, many hundreds of years after the times of Jesus Christ, and long after the doctrine had been thoroughly explained, and seemed to be perfectly well understood, as I understand it at present, who puzzled themselves about it, nevertheless, and at last invented a very strange way of solving the supposed difficulty. I call it strange, because it seems so to *me* now ; but, whether strange or not in itself, it was received by degrees almost universally ; and, to this day, only the Protestants have got rid of it. The notion of those people was, that the bread and wine, used in the Sacrament as symbols, or representations, or memorials of Christ's body and blood, when the priest had consecrated them were actually changed in their own substance, and became the very things which they represented ; so that now whoever fed upon them would feed upon Christ's flesh in the plain gross sense of the expression, as they assumed that Christ himself intended us to understand him."

"Oh! yes, Sir," said Mrs. Turner, interrupting me; "I know who *they* are; they are the Papists, who think in that manner. But isn't it idolatry to think so, Sir?" "No," I answered; "it is not idolatry merely to think so. The idolatry lies in their worshipping the bread and wine as a divine person; but then, you know, they suppose them to be a divine person, and, therefore, their idolatry is not wilful, and, consequently, pardonable. If indeed such a change had taken place, as they imagine, their conduct would not be idolatrous at all; but there is no necessity or sound reason for imagining any such change. Attend; and you will learn what you yourself are desirous to comprehend. That we must all of us eat Christ's flesh, in some sense or other, is as clear as possible; because he himself says so in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel. His expressions are of this kind; 'Except ye eat my flesh, ye have no life in you; he that eateth my flesh hath eternal life; my flesh is meat indeed; he that eateth my flesh, dwelleth in *me*, and I in *him*; I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.' This was his way of speaking; and the justness of it consists in its agreement with the notion of a sacrifice. Some beast, suppose, was slain to propitiate the Deity, and to obtain the pardon of their sins for those who offered it; well; but, to complete the transaction, it was necessary for the same persons to partake of the flesh of the beast by actually eating it. Now Jesus Christ was also to be slain as a sacrifice for the sins of all men; therefore, by parity of

reasoning, all men, wishing to have the benefit of his sacrifice, should partake of his flesh by eating it. The language which he employs is formed upon this idea. But then, how could all men, in all ages, eat his flesh, as each man did, on each occasion, the flesh of the beast which was sacrificed?"

"Aye, indeed, Sir," said Mrs. Turner, "*that* is very hard to explain; how can *that* be done?" "I will tell you," I replied; but the question was how to tell her, within a short compass, without resorting to the difficult terms invented by the ancient disputants; manducation, and its several kinds, oral, sacramental, mystical, and spiritual. However, I continued thus: "The principal thing to be observed is, that our Lord himself insinuates to us, in the same chapter, that it was not his meaning that 'eating his flesh' should be understood in the gross sense of eating *his real* flesh with *our* teeth; for, when his followers murmured at the expression, he told them plainly, 'that the flesh profiteth nothing;' that it would be no benefit to them whatever, actually to eat his flesh; what could he mean then? Why, he says, 'it is the spirit that quickeneth;' and, 'the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life;' the whole transaction, therefore, must be understood according to the spirit, and not according to the letter; that is, without the sacrifice of Christ we should have been lost for ever, and the eating of his flesh, which saves us, is the partaking of *that* sacrifice, or, in other words, of its fruits; namely, the pardon of our sins, and eternal life."

I stopped at this point, doubting whether I was sufficiently clear, and to see, therefore, whether they comprehended me or not; and Mrs. Turner imme-

diately asked me, whether it was possible to partake of Christ's sacrifice in any other way than by receiving the Sacrament. "Yes," I said, "undoubtedly; to receive the Sacrament may be impossible; the things most needful, therefore, in order to obtain its fruits, are a sincere repentance and a firm faith; and by the possession and exercise of those qualities we spiritually eat Christ's flesh, and really partake of his sacrifice. But of all the visible and ostensible modes of doing it, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the most important and the most efficient; because *there* we actually feed upon that which, in itself and its circumstances, represents, and implies, and exhibits the very sacrifice which was offered for our sins. A wilful neglect of that Sacrament, therefore, is a wilful separation of ourselves from Christ; but a worthy participation of it is such a communion with him as must needs, in effect, diffuse his graces all over us, and thereby implant and nourish in us the seeds of eternal life."

Thinking that I had now said as much as was expedient for one conversation upon this mystical rite and its spiritual benefits, and recollecting, also, the very weak state of the sick man himself, I desired them to turn the matter over in their own minds at their leisure; and so kneeling down by the bed-side, I prayed for a few minutes, and then departed.

At my next visit he appeared to have made a larger step towards recovery; and he still retained, in its full extent, the wholesome religious feeling, which his extreme peril and sudden restoration to hope of life had generated in his heart; but, during his protracted sickness, his temporal affairs had been



necessarily neglected, and had gone almost to ruin ; his wife could not attend either to *his* department, or even to her own, and was wholly occupied with attending upon *him* ; and the carter, who had been engaged to conduct the business and manage the horses, had killed one, and cheated them in every possible way ; so that these calamities having been just made known to the poor man, and there being no prospect of any active exertions on *his* part, or his wife's, for a long time to come, I observed, that his spirits were much depressed, and the joy of returning health sadly damped by the fear of poverty. The event, however, turned out to the furtherance of the object of my ministrations, and to the confirmation of the man himself in his religious sentiments, and in his belief and trust of a kind superintending Providence ; for, the case being mentioned amongst my rich neighbours, who never failed me even when I drew largely on their purses, the loss was immediately replaced, and something was furnished besides for the exigencies of the day ; the business too was soon placed under the care of a more trustworthy person ; and at length Mrs. Turner herself being able to leave her husband, on account of his great progress in the regaining of his strength, she frequented the markets, as in former times, and returned home with the usual profits. The threatening cloud, therefore, was entirely dispersed, and once more the sun shone brightly upon them.

During this interval much conversation took place between us on various subjects ; but, for the present, I record only what relates to the Sacrament, or what sprung immediately from talking about it. One day when I found him very much better and in good

spirits, "Turner," I said, "if God continues to bless you in this manner, I shall soon see you at church." "As soon as I possibly can, Sir," he replied, "I shall certainly be there." "You will be doing right," I said; "for whatever gratitude you may feel towards God in your own breast for his wonderful mercy in sparing your life, and bringing you to a clearer knowledge of the Christian dispensation, and upholding your temporal concerns, whilst you lay stretched on your sick-bed, helpless and useless, and a burden to your family, yet you must give glory to him in the great congregation, and in his own holy temple. Your case has made a noise in the parish; it is generally known that you received the Sacrament, when you seemed to have scarcely a moment more to live; and that it pleased a gracious Providence to make that very moment the happy crisis of your disorder. In short, from that moment the bitterness of death was past. There is a sort of curiosity, therefore, in men's minds to see how you will act; they remember your habits of drinking, and your entire neglect of public worship and the ordinances of religion; and they are on the watch to observe what you will do now. I am, therefore, the more glad to hear that you intend to come to church with all convenient speed; by so doing you will not only discharge a part of your own vows of amendment of life, but you will also glorify God in the eyes of men. He has indeed (such is his mercy to *us* poor sinners!) no greater glory, nor have his blissful angels any greater joy, than when we turn from the error of our ways, and make *him* alone the object of our fear and love, and trust and praise. And the example, too, in your circumstances will have an excellent effect. What a

scandal, what a dismay it would be to all the well-disposed, if you were to act otherwise, and relapse into your former habits; what a triumph to the wicked, and what an argument for them to persevere in their bad conduct and principles! But as you appear resolved, my good Turner, not to furnish them with such a triumph or excuse, so you must beware of being moved by their ridicule or reproaches. They will leave no stone unturned, depend upon it, to bring you back to their ranks; but you have now chosen another banner, under which, I trust, God will enable you to stand firm, and to fight the good fight. Undoubtedly, you will not be able to do it without aid from above; and that aid you must seek for in your own private chamber, and in God's public temple, and, more especially, at the holy altar of your Lord and Saviour. This I recommend above all."

My patient appeared to pay the closest attention to my advice, and to be deeply touched by it. Several times he would have interposed in the middle of my speech, but not wishing to be interrupted, I repressed him by signs; and when I had finished, his wife, who had also listened with equal apparent interest, now anticipated him, and said, "We have been talking the matter over, Sir, between ourselves, and we have made up our minds to take the Sacrament in the church, on the very earliest Sunday that we can, after my husband is stout enough to go there." "Nothing is more proper," I rejoined. "The enemies of religion will say, no doubt, that your husband took the Sacrament on his sick-bed from superstition, or fear, and when he had scarcely any of his senses about him, and that you yourself took it to bear him

company, and for no better reason ; but when they learn that you have done the same again together in health, and at church, they must acknowledge that the act is one of choice, and quite voluntary on your parts ; and some of them may be urged, perhaps, not only to give you credit for a good motive in both cases, but also to examine themselves and their own condition, and ultimately to follow your commendable example." " I wish it may be so," said the poor man ; " for then my sickness will be useful to others, as well as to myself." " Yes," I replied, " so I trust ; but you must be prepared beforehand to meet with some, on the other hand, who, being impenitent and incorrigible themselves, will be the more enraged and rancorous against *you*, and will call you by all sorts of opprobrious names, and misrepresent your best actions. But you must understand that God never intended this world to be a place of rest or happiness to any. The good Christian, indeed, may be full of peace and joy within ; but his affairs will not always go on so smoothly without ; and the opposition, and contradiction, and scorn, and obloquy of the wicked will not be the least of his troubles. Yet you must bear up courageously, and I am confident that if you are regular in your attendance at the Lord's table, and diligent and devout in your preparation for it, you will be so intimately united with Christ, and so strengthened with might in the inner man in consequence of that union, that you will be made perfect, instead of being cast down, by the worst tribulations which this world can bring upon you ; you will be able, in short, to do every thing."

" The power of the Sacrament is very great, I am

sure, Sir," said Thomas Turner ; " I know *that* now by the power of it upon myself ; but the union of which you speak, Sir, and which you have mentioned so often, after all what does *that* mean ? I cannot understand it." " I will read you a prayer," I replied, " in the office for the communion, which, perhaps, you have not observed, or not sufficiently considered. I did not read it when I administered the Sacrament to you in your awful extremity, because there are two prayers, of which the minister has liberty to choose the one that may appear at the time most suitable, and I did then choose this, as I doubted whether you would comprehend it so well as the other. But now, God be thanked ! I have an opportunity of explaining it to you ; and in doing *that*, I shall explain also your present difficulty, and some expressions besides to be met with in Scripture upon the same subject, which your ministers often use, but which many of the congregation perhaps do not understand."

Mrs. Turner having reached me the Prayer-book, and both of them appearing to be very desirous of hearing what I had to say, I first repeated the whole prayer itself, slowly, and emphatically, and then I commented upon it in the following manner : " You perceive," I said, " that, after having received the bread and wine, which are here called the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of Jesus Christ, we thank God, in this prayer, for having assured us thereby, that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of his Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people ; and next, we beseech him to assist us with his grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship. Now, what is meant

by this holy fellowship, this blessed company of all faithful people, this mystical body of Christ, is, in one word, the church ; and no person, not incorporated therein, can possibly, as far as we know, be saved. Jesus Christ is the head of this body corporate, the church ; and all they whom God will vouchsafe to admit into heaven, are the members of it ; nor can they otherwise get there. Scripture is decisive upon this point, that we are redeemed and saved only as a church ; only as being members of that body of which Christ is the head ; or only as being so connected with *him* as all members are connected with their heads respectively. But how can this be ? Why, this is a holy mystery ; this body corporate is a mystical body ; and the union of Christians with the rest of the members and with the head is a spiritual union. It is a beautiful, a lively, a forcible, an endearing figure of the relation which we bear to each other ; of the interest which Christ takes in our salvation ; and of the important fact, that there is no salvation for us, but by clinging and adhering closely to *him*. And under this figure, moreover, we perceive clearly, that, where the head is, there the members must necessarily be also, when their lot is ultimately fixed.

“ But how may we assure ourselves that we are accounted members of this mystical body, a circumstance which is of infinite moment to us, and yet, being mystical and spiritual, can only, as it should seem, be spiritually and not sensibly discerned ? It is true, it can only be spiritually discerned in its full and complete practical meaning and efficacy ; but it has pleased God to institute certain ceremonies, both as sensible signs, and as sure pledges, to all who

perform them properly and worthily, that they *do* belong to that mystical body, and that they shall reap the spiritual benefits of it. These ceremonies are Baptism, and the Supper of our Lord. By Baptism we are first engrafted into the body of Christ's church, and it needs no repetition, because, if we break the vows which we then contracted, and so forfeit the inestimable privileges of belonging to that body, yet we may recover them again without a fresh Baptism by repentance and faith. The effect and power of Baptism continue always in this manner, and upon this principle, so that a true repentance and a lively faith will reinstate us in the same situation in which Baptism originally placed us ; at least, with the help of the other Sacrament, which should be repeated perpetually. For, whenever we celebrate the other sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we renew our broken vows, and dedicate ourselves afresh to the service of our God and Saviour ; we join ourselves again, as members, to Christ's mystical body, the church, by this sacred act of communion with it ; we shew publicly to God and to men, that it is our wish and intention to do this ; and we pray that we may receive the bread and wine, so as to partake of the body and blood of Christ, being made thereby to dwell in Christ, and to be one with him, and he being made to dwell with *us*, and to be one with *us* ; that is, a perfect union being established between ourselves and *him*, which cannot but be followed by all spiritual benefits here, and by all bliss and glory hereafter."

Having paused here for a moment, I asked suddenly, "Do you recollect that, in the marriage-service, by an expression taken from Scripture, the

man and wife are called one flesh?" "I recollect it very well, Sir," said Thomas. "Is that the same sort of union as the one betwixt Christ and us in the Sacrament?" "It may help to explain it, certainly," I answered. "Indeed the union between man and wife, and that between Christ and the church, are compared together in the same service; and they are said to be a mystical union; that is, the man and the wife are one flesh, not really and actually in matter and substance, but in some hidden, sacred, and spiritual meaning; from which meaning, however, there comes out a very plain, and a very fine moral doctrine, which St. Paul inculcates very forcibly upon all husbands. 'So ought men to love their wives,' he saith, 'as their own bodies; he that loveth his wife loveth himself; for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it.' You see, then, in this case, what an excellent and beautiful moral conclusion the apostle arrives at with respect to the feeling of the husband towards the wife, in consequence of their being represented as one flesh. Now, this feeling Christ has, in the fullest and truest manner, towards his church; and he would impress the idea deeply upon us, by teaching us to consider the church as his body, himself the head, and each faithful Christian a member in particular. Well, therefore, may we argue from this representation of his own, that he loves and cherishes the church, even as his own flesh, and that he will confer every possible benefit upon it in this world and the next. Who, then, will not give the best sensible sign that he can of his being thus united to Christ, and receive in return the best sensible pledge that he can have of his being entitled thereby to all the blessings and benefits



of such a union ? But it is by a worthy receiving of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and by *that* alone, that this great and important act is sensibly performed."

Here I stopped, and was glad to perceive, by their countenances, that their understandings kept pace with me pretty well in the latter part of my explanation, which was fortunately suggested to me by the frequent reading of the marriage-service. In the former part, I think, they had only a faint glimmering, although I used no words which are not to be found in the Scriptures, or the Liturgy, and carefully avoided such as the controversialists have introduced to state and define their opinions. After a little consideration, therefore, I began again in this manner ; having thought of a similitude, which was below the dignity of my subject, indeed, but familiar to *them*, I trusted, and so the more adapted to clear away their difficulties, both as to words and things.

"Do you know," I said, "how the business of our great town is managed?"—"Yes, Sir," he answered, "it is done by a corporation."—"And is not a corporation, or body corporate," I said, "a collective body of people, enjoying certain rights and privileges peculiar to themselves, and not belonging to others who are not of the same body?" He assented. "Whoever then might wish," I said, "to obtain those rights, and enjoy those privileges, must be admitted a member of this body, and incorporated with it (such is the term), must he not?"—"He must, to be sure, Sir," was his reply. "And how is this done?" I asked. "Why, Sir," he answered, "there is an oath to be taken, I believe ; and there are rules and regulations, by which he must promise to abide ; and

when this is settled he will be on the same footing with the rest.”—“Very well,” I said; “and there is a head, too, is there not, over the whole corporate body, to see that the rules and regulations are executed; to watch over the general and particular interests of all the members, and to do the best that he can to enable them all to profit to the utmost by the union in which they are engaged?”—“It is very true, Sir,” he replied. “This then,” I said, “he is bound to do from his very situation, as head of the body; but suppose him to be exceedingly good, and wise, and powerful besides; so good, as to be naturally inclined in the highest degree to confer upon them every possible benefit; so wise, as to know better than all the rest of mankind what is for their real benefit, and how to effect it; and so powerful as to be able to accomplish, with perfect ease, all the purposes of his own wisdom and goodness; what should you think then of such a society? Would not very great numbers of persons be desirous to be incorporated in it, that they may put themselves under the protection and superintendence of such a head, and be as closely united with him as possible, in order to reap the fruits of his virtues in their own prosperity and happiness?” “There is no doubt of it, Sir,” he answered. “And,” I said, “if the head should require of the members to shew their disposition to union with him, and the estimation in which they hold their privileges, every now and then, by some test or symbol, would you not think it strange if they should refuse, or neglect, or not be eager to do it? Indeed, would you not call such conduct a virtual renunciation of their union, and their privileges too?”

By this time my similitude was clearly seen through, and Mrs. Turner exclaimed, “Ah! Sir, I understand

your meaning very well ; you are speaking of Christ ; and the church, and of Baptism, and the Sacrament ; and you have made all these things much plainer to me now, than they ever were before.”—“ I am glad of it,” I said, “ but I will go on to shew you some remarkable differences between the church and the other body, that you may be still better informed, and prize your Christian advantages, as a member of the church, at a still higher rate, and be the more forward on all occasions to celebrate the memorial of your Christian faith and hope. The head of the church gave his life for it to purchase the privileges to which it is entitled, pardon, grace, and immortality ; ought you not, therefore, do you think, to love, and reverence, and adore him, much beyond the mere earthly head of any human body corporate, and in some proportion to what he has done for you, and to such superior gifts and privileges ?”—“ We ought, indeed,” said the husband, fervently. “ But consider,” I continued, “ His death was a sacrifice, like the slaying of the bulls, and goats, and sheep, and other victims in ancient times ; and in the same manner as the worshippers were bound to partake of the flesh of the victims, in order to partake of the benefits of the sacrifice, so should we partake of his flesh, which was sacrificed for us, in order to partake of pardon, grace, and immortality. But his crucified flesh exists no longer, and his glorified flesh exists in heaven, too far from us. We cannot, therefore, partake of either literally ; nor could his disciples before he was crucified, when he established the rite. But it has pleased him, that his crucified flesh should be represented by the symbol of bread broken, and wine poured out ; and, to make the representation more lively and impressive, that the bread broken, and the wine poured out, should

be actually called his body and blood, and considered precisely the same as such. Now, if we literally feasted upon his flesh, then would *his* flesh and ours be literally mixed and united together; but this is impossible; the same effect, however, takes place mystically; after eating the bread, and drinking the wine, we are really and truly joined with him after a spiritual manner; and so we obtain present pardon, and present grace, and a present title to immortality. This is the hidden, the sacred, the beneficial meaning of the expression of feeding upon Christ. Now, what do you think of the holy rite?"

They hesitated, as if they could not find terms, either strong enough, or proper enough, to signify correctly the notions which they had now imbibed; but, another idea at this moment presented itself to my thoughts; I said, "Is not this house yours, my good Turner?"—"Yes, Sir," he answered, "it is mine, certainly; and it is almost all I have now."—"Well," I said, "never mind *that*; but tell me how you got it."—"I bought it, Sir," he replied, "a good many years ago."—"And what sort of a title did they make out for you?" I enquired. "Oh! Sir, an excellent title," he answered. "I have got the deeds in that box, Sir;" and as he said this, he pointed to a small deal box, standing upon a shelf, and covered with dust. "What?" I asked. "There are some pieces of old parchment there, with great seals upon them; are there?"—"Yes, Sir," he replied, "just so."—"And is there not one deed amongst them newer than the rest?" I asked again. "Do you mean the conveyance, Sir?" he enquired. "Yes," I said, "I do."—"Oh! yes, Sir," he exclaimed, "I have got *that* amongst them in the box; I shall not readily forget

it : for the stamp-duty and the attorney's charge for drawing it up cost me a deal of money besides the purchase."—" So," I said, " you keep all these deeds very safe, I suppose. Why, the conveyance, as you call it, conveyed the estate to you, did it not ?"— " Yes, Sir," he answered ; " when they put the deeds into my hands, I became possessed of the house immediately for my own."—" But these deeds are not the house itself, are they ?" I enquired. " No, Sir," he replied, smiling. " Yet," I said, " there is something very like it too."—" How so, Sir," he asked, wondering. " Why," I answered, " the house came with the deeds, certainly ; the delivery of the deeds was precisely the same thing as if the house itself had been delivered to you ; indeed it *was* delivered to you by the delivery of the deeds. If therefore you should lay your hands upon the deeds, and say, these are my title to the estate, you would speak very correctly ; but if you were to say, these deeds are my estate, nobody would be surprised at the expression, or misunderstand it for a moment ; it would be perfectly plain to all persons who have common sense."—" It is very true, Sir, indeed," he said ; and then he began to muse, as if he had suddenly caught a glimpse of the drift of all these questions.

I paused to give him time ; but before he was prepared to speak, his wife interposed, as she had done before, and said, " I think, Sir, you must be explaining to us, how the bread and wine in the Sacrament are taken for the body and blood of our Lord."—" Not exactly *that*," I rejoined ; " but how it is, that in the Lord's Supper, when the bread and wine are given to you consecrated by the minister, you verily and indeed take and receive the body and blood of

Christ."—"Yes, Sir," said the husband, "it is very clear to me now, since you put me in mind of the deed of conveyance of my house."—"And would it make any difference," I asked, "if the house or estate were in America?"—"None at all, Sir," he answered; "be it where it might, the deed would give it to me just the same."—"It is very true," I said; "and exactly so, although the real body and blood of Christ are not present upon the spot, yet we receive them, nevertheless, in such a manner as to derive from them all their peculiar benefits, as we should the benefits of the estate. In short, Jesus Christ has himself appointed it to be so, by calling the bread and wine his body and blood; it appears by the Scriptures that we have God's promise to accept the bread and wine as such; and we may depend upon it, that the Holy Ghost will make them effectual to their end. It is in this sacred rite that he generally shews his power most strikingly. His influences upon us begin at our baptism; but they are completed at length in this Sacrament. In our baptism we are born of the Spirit; every time that we go to the Lord's table we grow in grace, and proceed from strength to strength until we become perfect, and are ripe for heaven. The union between Christ, our head, and us who are members of his body, becomes closer and more intimate by this constant spiritual feeding, until God considers us as being one with him, and then, as a matter of course, admits us as co-heirs with Christ into his glorious kingdom above."

Upon saying this, I rose from my seat, as it was not convenient for me to stay any longer. They both did the same, and thanked me repeatedly for the pains which I had taken to instruct them. My answer was,

that I wished them to understand the holy rite thoroughly, if possible, before they came publicly to the altar; "for it is reasonable to suppose," I said, "that God will expect of us more preparation of every kind, more knowledge of what we are about to do, and better qualifications for doing it worthily, when we communicate deliberately and at leisure, than when we communicate upon a sudden emergency which allows of no delay. In this latter case we do the best that we can; in the other we must do the same; that is, we must use the opportunity of preparation with a proportionate diligence." Thus I left them.

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§ 3.—*The Same, and Mr. Barking.*

Two or three days elapsed before I visited them again. In this interval I endeavoured to retrace my steps through the conversations which have been represented in the previous sheets; and it appeared to me, that, as I had advanced so far towards a full elucidation of this important subject of the Sacrament, it would be worth while, if occasions should present themselves, to explain whatever might still remain untouched. At the same time I was well aware, that some of the points already handled were but imperfectly understood. I had often used expressions, with which persons in the habit of attending church are familiarly acquainted; but neither the expressions, nor the ideas represented by them, were at all known to these people; so that they only obtained a general and confused notion of my meaning, when they happened to comprehend the antecedent and

subsequent passages. All these obscurities, therefore, were also to be cleared up, as opportunities might occur, before I could pretend to have accomplished my object. They knew indeed already much more than was necessary for humble-minded Christians to know, in order to enable them to communicate worthily; but they were very inquisitive, especially Mrs. Turner, and difficulties suggested themselves to their thoughts, the explanation of which suggested others in succession. It was to be hoped, however, that the series would not be infinite, and that I might bring the whole to a prosperous conclusion.

I entered their house on the next occasion after a consideration of this kind. Mrs. Turner was alone; her husband, she said, had just gone out for the first time, under the care of a neighbour, to take an airing in a chaise-cart. Immediately I congratulated her upon his extraordinary amendment, and expressed my hope that after such a mercy he would never return again to his former vicious habit. "He shews no disposition as yet to do so, Sir," she answered. "It would be madness for him to drink in his present state; the trial of his resolution is still to come. God knows what the event may be! He is determined, however, Sir, to take the Sacrament in the church, according to his first intention. But you have alarmed me, Sir, about the preparation, which you say is necessary in our present circumstances; indeed, I think now, as I thought in the beginning, that a person in my business can never be prepared sufficiently." "But," I said rather sarcastically, "you are always sufficiently prepared to die, I presume?" "Ah! Sir," she replied, "that is the old argument; it puts me to silence at once; no, no, I



am sadly troubled about it ; yet, I fear, I shall go on, putting the great concern off and off till it is too late." " Why should you act so foolishly ?" I asked. " Is there anything in the nature of your business to make it necessarily dishonest ? And if that were so, which seems however incredible, is there no other business in the world, which is honest in itself, and which you may pursue honestly, and so pick up an honest and sufficient livelihood ?" " Why, Sir, to tell you the truth," she answered, " I shall not get much by my business, if I carry it on with strict honesty ; I see *that* now ; for I am more scrupulous than I was, and my profits are less." " Thank God !" I exclaimed with earnestness. " If you are poorer at home, you will be richer with God ; to be poor, because you are determined to be honest, is to lay up a treasure in heaven. This is a great improvement in your character and conduct ; it is the awe of the Sacrament which has produced the good effect ; you are growing in grace already, and there is no knowing what wonders the Spirit may do for you, if you frequently put yourself in the way of his influence ; the fear of poverty will then be quite ridiculous."

This sentiment was beyond Mrs. Turner's calibre, and after a little thought she said, " Yes, Sir : but it is a very painful thing *now* to sink below our former respectability and comfort." " And is it not," I rejoined, " a very pleasant thing *now* to have a good conscience ?" She was silent ; so I continued, " Why, a dry crust and a cup of cold water, with a good conscience, must be better, I should think, yes, and pleasanter, than the nicest dainties procured by cheating lies, and cunning tricks, which your mind secretly

cries out against within you, and which you are, therefore, quite sure that God will condemn. But what need is there of any lies or tricks in *your* business?" "Oh! do not mention it, Sir," she replied hastily; "I should be ashamed to tell you all that I once did, almost without scruple, in order to drive a more profitable trade; but last night, Sir, I threw away some fish that was unsound, and unwholesome; I could not find in my heart to hawk it about." "Mrs. Turner," I exclaimed, "I admire you for *that*, and God will reward you too even here if you continue steadfast in the same principles under the guidance of his spirit; he will give you, that is, either unexpected prosperity, or contentment in poverty. But, perhaps, it may be as well to leave the fish-market altogether, if it be attended with so many temptations. How is the other?" "Why, I should do better, Sir," she replied, "with fruit and greens, if I could get employment enough; there is less temptation there." "Very well," I said, "then turn your mind to *that*. But how is your husband's business?" "Oh! Sir," she answered at once, "*that* is all very straight-forward and honest; he has nothing to reproach himself with in any respect, nor any need of little paltry lies or tricks." "I am glad of it," I said; "and I should hope, if he pursued it steadily, there would be no further occasion for *you* to toil and slave and load your conscience, as you have been used to do. All his gains will come home, instead of going to the ale-house; and he will be always in the way to receive orders, and in a condition to execute them. *That* will make a prodigious difference, Mrs. Turner; there will be more saved in that way than you can get in any way."

Mrs. Turner shook her head at this, not as if it was an erroneous calculation, but as if she feared the thing would never come to pass ; and before I could enquire into the grounds of this constant distrust which she seemed to have of her husband, he was driven up to the door, and she ran out in a hurry to help him down, and into the house. I went out also myself, and was sorry to observe that his friend and companion was no other than Mr. Barking, a man of most profligate morals, or rather without the restraint of any morals at all. Nothing was sacred in this man's estimation ; neither the religion, nor the government of his country ; neither the reputation of his neighbour, nor the chastity of his neighbour's wife : his own passions and appetites were his only law ; he recked not of God, or devil ; nevertheless, he was a man to whom I judged it politic to be civil, in the hope that some time or other I might have the better chance of catching him. So I said to him, " It is extremely kind of you, Mr. Barking, to take the sick man out in this manner. A little more air and gentle exercise will bring him on faster in the re-establishment of his health." " Aye, aye, Sir," he replied, touching his hat ; " but what is the matter with him now ? He used to be a jolly, spirited fellow, and never was known to flinch his glass ; but now he won't taste a drop. I drove him to the Bull, where there is the best tap in the parish ; but it wouldn't do. Neither the fame, nor the sight of the ale itself sparkling in the tankard, could make him stir a peg. I should like to know what you have been all doing to him ?"

Thus he went on with volubility enough, and without any sense of decorum ; the question, with which

he ended, was evidently pointed at *me*, although he looked at Mrs. Turner when he spoke. I answered smiling, "Have you forgotten the old proverb, Mr. Barking? A burnt child dreads the fire." He was smitten a little; but his confidence soon returned, and he said sneeringly, "Well, a merry life for *me*, whatever the parsons may preach!" "But poor Turner has not been very merry of late," I retorted gravely. "No," he said; "not for a month, or so; but he spent many years before *that*, as jolly as he could wish to be; and another man may be more lucky still." "We differ about luck, Mr. Barking," I replied. "I consider health the bad luck, and sickness the good; so that in my estimation Turner here is one of the luckiest of men." At this Mr. Barking stared with his eyes extended, and with a mixture of derision in his look; and probably he would have called upon me tauntingly to explain the paradox; but by this time, Mr. Turner, being safe down from the cart, unexpectedly, and much to my satisfaction, explained it himself; for he said, "Yes, indeed, Sir, *that* I am. If it had not been for this sickness, I should have been in the high road to the devil's kingdom, or, perhaps, in it already?" "The man's turned Methodist, I vow," exclaimed Mr. Barking, with a bitter tone of contempt, and whipping his horse, suddenly drove off at a gallop.

We all now went into the house, and Turner being placed in the great chair to rest himself, (for he was very much fatigued) at length, after some unimportant conversation with his wife, when I saw that he was pretty well recovered, I told him how sorry I was to find that he was so intimate with this Mr. Barking. "Why, Sir, I cannot help myself," he

answered, with a countenance abashed ; he has done me some little services, and he wishes to be kind to me now ; and, besides, Sir, he gets me a great deal of business to and from the town ; so I cannot, in gratitude or prudence, give up his acquaintance at once. But I am vexed and ashamed, Sir, that he treated you so rudely." "Oh!" I said, "do not trouble yourself about *that* ; he treated me much better than I expected ; and, I think, we have sent him home with a sting in his heart." "He won't mind it, Sir, I fear," replied Turner. "He comes home every day from the town, loaded with newspapers, and other printed things ; he says they throw them into his cart, as he passes through the streets ; well, Sir, he takes them to the public-house in the evening, and there he reads them aloud to the company ; and, I am sure, no good comes of it." "It is not likely," I said ; "for I can easily guess what sort of papers they are ; and, I have no doubt, they believe every word of them as much as the Gospel." "As much as the Gospel, Sir !" he answered. "Why, yes, indeed, and a great deal more than the Gospel. Mr. Barking does not believe the Gospel at all, Sir ; nor many more of them. But, thank God, Sir, I am myself safe yet."

This lamentable circumstance was too well known to me, and as it interfered with my ministrations most unfortunately in the very case of these Turners, I will here rapidly describe it. A diabolical spirit had been long at work in secret, and was now making a prodigious public effort all over the kingdom, availing itself of the public distress, to undermine and overthrow our civil and ecclesiastical establishments, as well as our holy religion itself. The malicious,

the persevering, the indefatigable industry, with which the horrible attempt was carried on, is almost incredible. Our neighbouring town was one of the head-quarters of the infidel agitators, from whence issued forth a torrent of sedition and blasphemy, which absolutely inundated all the surrounding villages, and my own in particular. Every vehicle, like Mr. Barking's, brought amongst us a liberal cargo of pestilential writings which were scattered about at random ; but there were emissaries besides, men picked out for the purpose, who came with their bundles of treason and impiety, and hunted out the persons most likely to be corrupted with such poison ; to whom they lent their tracts for a few days, to be studied at leisure, and discussed and explained them afterwards, when they called a second time to receive back their pernicious loan. The windows of newsmen and stationers teemed with similar noxious articles for sale ; and every dead wall was chalked with some malignant sentiment. An attempt had been made in London to arrest the progress of this evil by the prosecution of a notorious ringleader ; but a jury, to their eternal disgrace, having acquitted the defendant, it raged henceforth without controul, and we were abandoned by the government of the country to our own resources. I did what I could to stem the torrent ; I preached, I talked, I published, I distributed pamphlets against pamphlets in abundance, by the help of some of my rich parishioners, who enabled me to buy them ; I visited the shops of the parochial venders, and endeavoured to dissuade and alarm them from their destructive and disgraceful traffic.

By these various methods some good was pro-

duced. All the venders readily consented at once to withdraw the obnoxious publications from their windows, and finally also, but with reluctance, from their counters. Some gave them up altogether, and accepted my antidotes in exchange, to sell for their own profit. There was one Bourke from Ireland, a newsmen and petty bookseller, with whom I had the most trouble, although I employed him myself, and had recommended him to many other families. He is now dead, poor man, and has left a large family a burden on the parish. I talked to him in his shop, where I went on purpose; on the roads, where I continually met him delivering his newspapers; and at my own house, when he came there to be paid his bills. Yet he shuffled with me as much as he could; and, now and then, in spite of all I could say, I espied a bad publication in his window, or detected one on his counter or shelves. I suspected him of course to be a man of wrong principles himself; but, as you shall see, he denied the charge; and, perhaps, after all he was more foolish than wicked.

My conversations with him in his shop and on the roads were necessarily short; but one day, having caught him at my own house, when I was quite at leisure for a longer discussion, I desired that he might be brought into my study; and this is perhaps the only opportunity that I may find of recording what passed between us. "Why will you continue, Mr. Bourke," I said, as I looked over his bill, "to introduce into the parish those periodical works, and other books, of which I have complained to you so often?" "Oh! Sir," he answered confidently enough, "if I did not do it, there are plenty of people who would." "Well," I said; "and there

will be always, I suppose, plenty of thieves in the world ; but perhaps you would not turn thief yourself, to take the trade out of the hands of others ?” “ *That is a very different case, Sir,*” he replied. “ Not very different,” I said ; “ but if you do not see the likeness, take another. Your neighbour, Mr. Winchcomb, had his hen-roost plundered the night before last. He is very careless, you know, and might well expect such an event. Suppose, therefore, you had reasoned thus with yourself secretly, being as you are so good a reasoner, ‘ this foolish neighbour of mine will certainly lose his fowls, and why should not I have them as well as another ? I will steal them myself this very night.’ What do you say to this ?” “ Stealing is not the same thing, Sir,” he answered ; “ I hope you do not suspect me of being a thief.” “ Well, well,” I said, “ stealing is only one of many crimes ; and if I were to go through them all singly, you would probably tell me, that you would not be guilty of any of them, under so lame and wretched a pretence as this ; namely, that others would be guilty of them, if you were not. Did any man of common sense ever comfort himself with the assurance that he was free from blame, or that God would pardon him when he did a wrong thing, which others would have done if he had left it undone ? What have any of us to do with the actions or dispositions of others ? We shall be judged by our own, Mr. Bourke ; shall we not ?”

Mr. Bourke was somewhat abashed, and began to stammer out another excuse of his conduct ; but I determined to follow up his first position one step further, and said, “ Besides, it is not so clear that others would take up this trade, if you relinquished



it ; at least none of our own parish ; for all the rest who practised it a little while ago have given it up altogether ; and neither they, nor any body else shew any inclination to resume it, or begin it afresh. So the whole glory of this business rests entirely upon your own head, Mr. Bourke ; but I do not think that your respectable customers will like it." " Why, Sir," he replied boldly, " I do it to please my customers ; I take in these works by their positive orders, and solely to furnish them with the number which they may want. It is my profession to procure books from the town ; my customers are answerable for what they order, not I who supply them." " Pray, Mr. Bourke," I said, " who are these customers, who press you so much for those very pious and edifying books ?" Here he hesitated ; but, being urged in such a manner as to render any subterfuge both difficult and suspicious, at length he informed me that they were not of our own parish, but of the parish beyond us. " Oh ! very well," I said ; " you need not name their names, if they are out of my jurisdiction. But how comes it to pass, Mr. Bourke, that they do not encourage the tradesmen of their own parish ? Or is this the fact, that they can find nobody in their own parish to undertake so creditable a trade ? Why, Mr. Bourke, you deserve greater glory than I was aware of before, thus to work for two parishes, and to save the consciences of so many in both, who would take up this trade, if *you* laid it down !"

Mr. Bourke was very uneasy with all this bantering, and perhaps with the consciousness of prevarication. He moved about, and seemed anxious to be gone ; but he had not yet received his money, and

so he was obliged to hear me out, or go unpaid. I assailed him again in this manner. "But after all, Mr. Bourke," I said, "the account which you give me does not hang well together. If you only procure as many of these works as are expressly ordered by your customers, what need can there be for them to lie on your counter, or to be exposed in your windows? Depend upon it, the general belief will be, that you wish to bring them into notice; to invite buyers, and promote mischief by the sale of them." "I have no such thought, Sir, I assure you," he replied stoutly; "there are none to be seen in my windows at any time now; and if they are seen upon my counter, it is only when the town-parcel is first unpacked, and whilst I prepare the separate numbers for delivery." "You are mistaken, Mr. Bourke," I said, "in some way or other in regard to this matter. As to your counter, indeed, I cannot speak positively what your system may be at the present moment; for I have not been lately in your shop. But when I was last there, in *your* absence, I saw one of these vile publications on your counter, and pointed it out with great surprise and sorrow to your wife, who turned as red as fire at the discovery. I was glad, Mr. Bourke, to see her blush in that manner; for I concluded that there were some sparks of honesty within her still unextinguished; so shame at least may have made her more careful. But what can be said for the windows, where, only two days ago, there was exhibited a book, which, in spite of the astonishing laxity or gross corruption of juries, has been condemned in the courts of justice again, and again?" "You have been misinformed, Sir," he answered, almost as stoutly as before; "nothing

will probably put his label upon the paper, or bottle, to announce to the thoughtless that the contents are a rank poison. Is not this generally done?" "It ought to be, Sir," he replied without hesitation. "But after all," I said, "this poison can do no more of itself than destroy the body in this world, which will rise to life again in the next, whatever terrible disaster may cut short its existence here. But there is a death of the soul, Mr. Bourke, in this world also; a death infinitely more terrible than the other, because it dooms the whole man, both body and soul, to an infinite eternal misery; a death to righteousness, to all goodness, to every Christian grace and virtue; and this death is the natural fruit of those detestable books which you sell without scruple. But let me tell you, that he who does so, is ten million times more guilty than he who sells arsenic without caution for common medicine, or passes it off upon the unwary for pleasant and wholesome food."

Here I paused, but soon resumed my speech in a mitigated tone; my antagonist being quite silent, but shewing, as I thought, some symptoms of remorse. "My good Mr. Bourke," I said, mournfully, "you are one of those who never read their Bible, and never worship God in his holy ordinances, and in his own holy house. If you were a regular attendant there, hallowing his Sabbaths and listening to his ministers, the blessing of God might descend from heaven upon your head, and a new spirit might be infused into your heart; but this will never be, if you neglect the proper appointed means. The miserable publications of the day, such as newspapers, pamphlets, and the like, especially those which are hostile to the

peace and the religion of your country, are now your only study. I see you poring over them, even as you travel along the highway, and as if your whole soul was wrapped up in them, and your salvation depended upon them. But if you studied your Bible, and came to church with half the same zeal and earnestness, you would as soon cut off a hand or a foot as deal in those unchristian and ungodly books. 'Offences must needs come, (said our blessed Lord himself) but woe to that man, by whom the offence cometh !' Let this for ever sound in your ears ! It is an awful admonition."

Upon this, not wishing to prolong the conversation, I counted out his money, and put it into his hands ; but, before he went away, he said, " My situation is a difficult one, Sir ; and my business compels me to work on a Sunday, as on other days. I do not deny, however, but that I might sometimes come to church, if I had a sitting there ; and I certainly would come, if I were not liable to be turned out perpetually, at the nod of the owner of the pew in which the pew-opener might happen to place me. This is a very disagreeable thing, Sir ; and it prevents a great many people besides *me*, from worshipping God in our parish-church." " Mr. Bourke," I answered, " this is an unavoidable evil, where the population exceeds the church-room ; but we do the best we can to remedy it. You know, we have three services ; and it is only at the middle service that the church has any appearance of being full. At the other services you may be pretty sure, when once placed, of not being disturbed. But I will endeavour to obtain for you a sitting of your own, when a vacancy occurs in a convenient situation." " I shall

be much obliged to you," he said ; and so we parted. The sitting was accordingly procured, and he came to church, he came, however, but very rarely, and so he profited as little ; and now and then he still required to be reminded of a bad book or two which found their way into his shop.

I now go back to Thomas Turner, whose acquaintance with Mr. Barking, and whose remark on the infidel state of some of my parishioners, led me to describe the threatening aspect of the times, and the chief means which I used to make the storm pass harmless over our heads. But in fact nothing was so effectual as the conviction and punishment of Carlile, which occurred a few years later. From that moment we began to respire again with freedom, and the chief part of the machinery at work to demoralise and unchristianise us fell to the ground at once.

Meanwhile, poor Turner, who was yet but a babe in religion, and surrounded and assailed by these dangers, was to be fed and nourished with instruction, with advice, with admonition. But, on the present occasion, he was justly entitled to my commendation ; he had successfully resisted the first temptation to renew his darling sin, although the tempter had a powerful influence over him. So I began with this.

" Mr. Turner," I said, " this man and his pot-companions are confessed infidels, it seems ; and therefore you would do well to regard all their friendly offers with a suspicious eye. This first attempt of Mr. Barking's shews you what you may expect, if you venture amongst them. You have met it nobly. Hitherto we had nothing but good resolutions ; now you have confirmed them by a good act ; and you have not been shaken by sneers or reproaches. To

endure, however, to the end you must have continual accessions of grace ; and I am delighted to hear from Mrs. Turner, that you still mean to seek them without delay, where they are to be had in the greatest abundance, by those who seek them worthily, at the holy altar of your Saviour, and in the sacred temple of your God. I am satisfied with respect to the preparation of you both. You are both evidently advancing in righteousness ; it is proved by a fact in both. But to those that have shall more be given ; and what is now difficult shall become easy ; and what seems impossible shall no longer be so. With God's grace all things are possible." Thus I cautioned, commended, and encouraged them.

" It is my intention, Sir, certainly," replied Mr. Turner, " to come to church, and to take the Sacrament there, as soon as I well can ; but I fear you think too highly of what I have done to-day." " It is the proof of an undoubted improvement," I said ; " is it not ?" He was unwilling to acknowledge it. I continued : " If you had been riding at your leisure with Mr. Barking before your sickness, would you have passed the Bull without complying with his invitation to drink there with him ?" He confessed that he should not. " And which is agreeable to God's commands ?" I said ; " to abstain from drinking, or to indulge in it ?" " To abstain, Sir, no doubt," he answered ; " but if I had not done so, I might have brought on the same sickness again. I abstained only from fear." " There are worthier motives," I said, " unquestionably ; but fear is no bad motive to begin with. ' The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.' When God corrects us, he expects that we should first fear him, and tremble

at the thought of repeating that which provoked him. But we may soon advance from fear to love, when we reflect that he corrected us in order to save us; that instead of smiting us to the earth, which our sins deserved, he gave us a fresh trial. Here is reason for love to cast out fear. In your case, the repentance which God permitted you to feel and express, during your sickness; the Lord's Supper, which he permitted you to partake of when you seemed to be at the last extremity; and now your restoration as it were from the dead to a new life; the power which you have had to-day to overcome the sin which before so easily beset you; and your resolution to go to the holy table to ask for more strength, and to apply more closely to yourself the pardoning and sanctifying grace of your Saviour; all these, when duly considered, are so many striking proofs of God's love towards *you*, and may well engage *your* love towards *him* in return. This is a simple and natural proceeding; 'we love *him*,' says an apostle, 'because he first loved *us*.' Cherish this love, therefore, and increase it by every method; by meditating upon his goodness, by studying his word, by frequenting his house, by offering yourself up at his altar. The great sacrifice of atonement for sin was once made by Jesus Christ for all upon the cross; but in the Sacrament, you may each make a sacrifice of your own for yourselves; a sacrifice, that is, both of your body and of your soul to do God's will; a sacrifice which he will most assuredly accept, because it will be made *with* Christ, and *by* him, and *in* him. Do this, my good friend, and gradually all your fears, having no longer any reasonable foundation, will be swallowed up in love."

Nothing more occurred at this visit which was of any material consequence. On the following Sunday they were both at church, and again, on the Sunday afterwards; but when the Sacrament-Sunday arrived, they were neither of them to be seen. I had felt foolishly secure before, and now was alarmed, lest they might be relapsing into their ancient habits. Mrs. Turner had not relinquished the fish-market, as I had advised her to do; and her husband had returned to the management of his usual business, and to all the temptations to which it had exposed him; but nothing amiss had yet reached my ears.

I visited them early in the week, at an hour when I was most likely to find them both at home; and so far I succeeded. Upon my entering they betrayed considerable uneasiness; and they rose from their chairs with haste, and with some sort of confusion which I had never witnessed in them before. "Their consciences smite them," I said to myself; but I pretended not to observe it, that I might be able to proceed with the greater care. Silence now ensued; and there was evidently on their parts an expectation of some event mixed with fear. "If," I said to myself again, "they are thus troubled at the thought of giving an account of their conduct to *me*, have they no anxiety and alarm about giving their account to the great Judge of all?" We were all yet standing; I broke the silence by saying, "We will sit down, if you please." Upon this they each of them, with a studious civility, offered me the chairs on which they had been sitting to dine; but I declined them, and said, "No; take your own chairs, and I will sit here in the corner." This being done, all was silent again; and they became more and more disturbed.



My silence, perhaps, disturbed them more than my reproaches would have done at this moment. I had not even asked them how they were ; nor did they venture to put the same question to *me*. At length I began gravely thus :—

“ I expected to have found one or both of you very ill,” I said ; “ yes, I will speak much stronger, I hoped to do so.” “ You hoped that we were ill, Sir ?” exclaimed Mrs. Turner, with pretended, rather than real surprise, as I imagined at least. “ *That* is very unlike *your* character, Sir, to wish that people may be ill !” “ My wish is for your good,” I said, “ in whatever way *that* may be effected. If people are better, therefore, when they are ill than when they are well, is it any wonder that I should wish them to be ill ?” “ You are angry with us, I perceive, Sir,” replied Mrs. Turner, “ because we did not come to the Sacrament.” “ Not angry,” I said, “ but sorry, very sorry ; and fearful too for your safety : for I reason with myself in this manner : These persons have either committed some fresh sin, which deters them from appearing at the table of their Lord, and are, perhaps, determined to go on repeating their sin ; or they are of that irresolute, unstable, and wavering disposition, which totally unfits those who have it for entering into the kingdom of God.”

They were speechless ; but I determined to compel them to talk by asking them questions ; so I said, “ Did you not promise, both of you, to take the Sacrament in the church, on the earliest day after you came there ?” “ There was no promise on my part, Sir, I think,” Mrs. Turner answered, with hesitation, and her eyes averted ; “ I intended to do it

certainly, if I thought myself sufficiently prepared at the time." "And what is *your* idea of the matter?" I said, looking fixedly at the husband. "Why, Sir," he replied, "to speak honestly between God and my conscience, I cannot deny but that I considered myself under a promise." "Yes," I said; "you received the Sacrament the first time in haste, with the best preparation that a dying man could make; a short preparation in point of space, but a good one, perhaps, for the feeling which accompanied it. Well; it pleased God to raise you up, as if it had been by a miracle. Immediately your heart swelled with gratitude towards your Almighty and most merciful Father, and you vowed a solemn vow (so I thought) of devoting yourself for ever to his service. When I called it a promise, I called it by too poor and low a name; it was a vow, not to be broken without imminent hazard of your soul; it was a vow, not merely to *me*, but through me, to God, whose minister I am; nay, indeed, to God himself, I doubt not. And a part of the vow was to seal and ratify the vow itself at the holy altar; to do *that* deliberately and thankfully, and with a full understanding of its inestimable value, which you had done before, in a moment of extreme pressure, when you were labouring under the burden of sin, and dreaded to leave this world without some pledge of pardon. Now lay your hand upon your heart, and tell me, whether a single word of what I have said be false."

"No, Sir," he replied with a downcast look; "it is all true; you have described the whole thing exactly, as if you had been privy to my inmost thoughts; and I must confess, that I have fallen short of what I then wished and intended." "Well," I said, "to be

conscious of a fault, and still more, to confess it openly, is the first step, and a most necessary one, towards the correction of it. God himself too requires this confession of us, and will not pardon us without it. But what was the cause of your failure? It behoves you to be very careful in ascertaining it, that you may apply a proper remedy." "I am not good enough," he answered immediately, "to take the Sacrament in the eyes of so many people." "Then you must take the Sacrament," I said, "in order to make yourself good enough. I must tell you plainly, Mr. Turner; if this be the whole matter, and the real state of the case, you are extremely foolish. I have explained this to you in conversation again and again; till I am almost tired of talking about it; and the books, which I have given you, explain it still better. You have had ample leisure for reading and studying them. I believe that you have done it; and I am quite sure, that neither *you*, nor your wife, can overthrow what is there advanced on the subject." Then, recollecting suddenly some striking passages in Jeremy Taylor, I continued almost without a pause; "Every Christian, I tell you both, must come to the holy table; they, who are just beginning to be good, must come that they may grow in grace; the weak must come, that they may be strengthened, and the strong lest they become weak by neglecting it; the sick must come to be cured, they who are in health to preserve it; they who think no preparation sufficient must come that they may learn how to prepare themselves better; the busy must come, but they must leave their business behind them; they who are at enmity with their neighbours must come, but they must not bring their enmities with them; they

that are in sin too must come, only they must not come so; in short, no state, in which any man may happen to be, is an excuse for not coming to the Sacrament; because, although that state may be a bad one, yet he may get out of it, whenever he will, by the covenanted grace and help of God."

Poor Turner had nothing to say to all this; even his wife, with all her natural shrewdness and volubility of tongue, was quite dumb; so I resumed the discussion in this manner. "But you talk," I said, "Mr. Turner, about your not being good enough to take the Sacrament in the eyes of the congregation. What scandal can be the consequence of such a proceeding? The congregation know, we will suppose, that you have been a drunkard; but they will know also, or they will readily imagine at least, that you come to the Sacrament, improved by affliction; not yet indeed so good as you wish to be, but hoping to be made so by the Sacrament itself, which is of all things most calculated to do it. And then if they should afterwards hear that you have abandoned the alehouse, you will stand fully justified in their sight: they might say, we trembled for him lest he might be like Judas with his traitorous hand on the same table with his Lord and Saviour; but the event shows, that he judged rightly for himself, and that his resolutions of soberness have been strengthened by the sacred rite."

Still he was silent, but he shook his head, doubtfully, and mournfully; so I said plainly and with more severity, "If you were drunk on Saturday, and determined to get drunk again on Monday, then I should understand, why you might reasonably forbear to take the Sacrament, publicly, or privately, on the

intervening Sunday. To take it at all would be a most horrible impiety; and to take it publicly would be so monstrous a scandal, that even your infidel friends would be amazed at it. They wish and advise you, no doubt, to abstain from the Sacrament; but I never will believe, that they carry their wickedness to so enormous a height, as to advise or wish you to profane and insult it. However, you have abstained even when you could not do so without breaking a solemn vow contracted under one of God's painful visitations. Am I to explain your conduct in the way that I have suggested? Or, will you explain it in some other way yourself?"

"I have not been drunk, Sir," he answered pretty confidently, "since my sickness." "Have you been to the public-house," I asked, "within the last week, and since Sunday?" He was uneasy at this question, but he acknowledged that he had. "Once, twice, thrice, or how often?" I asked again. "Two or three times," he replied slowly, as if he were trying to recollect. "Did you sit late?" I inquired. "No, not very late, Sir," he answered. "And did you meet the same persons as formerly? Mr. Barking, &c. &c.?" I inquired again. "Yes, Sir," he replied; "Mr. Barking was there, certainly." "And did he read his papers to you all, as usual?" I asked. "He did, Sir," was his answer. "Now tell me another thing, if you please," I said; "what toasts did you drink?"

Hitherto he replied to my questions, although with the strongest symptoms of perturbation; but now he was silent. I repeated the last, but he was silent still. "Very well," I said; "then I conclude, from your refusal to answer me, that the toasts were not

fit for my ears; and from *that* again I conclude further, that your meetings were drunken ones, or seditious ones, or irreligious ones, or all of these together." He did not deny it. "Was it wise then in *you*, Mr. Turner," I said, "to venture into such a place, and amongst such persons, after a hair-breadth escape from death; after partaking in private of the body and blood of Christ; after vowing a vow to do the same in public? Is it not totally contrary to all purity and holiness, as well as to everything else which you yourself had designed, resolved, and vowed?" He could not utter a word. I continued—"Now I understand too well, why your heart recoiled against the thought of coming to the altar on Sunday last. There is indeed no fellowship between Christ and Belial; between the prayers and praises of faithful Christians and the lewd songs and blasphemies of drunken adulterers and infidels. But my wonder is, snatched, as you appeared to be, like a brand out of the fire, that your heart did not recoil against such profligate company and such depraved doings. Beware, Mr. Turner, beware, I beseech you, lest you trample your blessed Saviour under your feet, or crucify him afresh. If so, it had been better for you to have died without knowing him."

The poor man was deeply touched with this, and the tears ran down his cheeks; his chair too shook under him; he attempted to speak, but his voice choked him. At length Mrs. Turner interposed. I had not observed how she was affected during the latter part of what had passed; but now she exclaimed in a sorrowful tone, "Ah! Sir; did not I say that it would be better for him not to take the Sacrament? Every sin will now be aggravated, and perhaps un-

pardonable. It is well that he did not take it again in the church; *that* would have made things still worse."

"Then," I said immediately, "you go upon the supposition that your husband must inevitably return to his sins. But I should be glad to know"—and I spoke it with a tone that thrilled them both—"what overwhelming necessity presses him down, and chains him to his vices; what irresistible force drags him along, or lashes him on with whips, as it were, to the old haunts of wickedness. What is it but his own astonishing and most culpable weakness? His own base propensity, which degrades him from man to beast? Could God do more to rouse him from his stupefaction, and compel him to shake off his brutal habits, than to make death sit upon his pillow, death following in the train of sin; and to place eternal judgment before his eyes, the sure consequence of sin unpardoned; then graciously to forgive him all, and to offer him the precious body and blood of his Son for his soul's health, and the powerful aid of his Holy Spirit, if he would use it to keep him upright? What could God do more than this? Yes; he indulged him with an opportunity of binding himself by a public vow, as he had done before by a private one, and of thus acquiring additional strength to walk in the ways of godliness. But it seems, it is all in vain; no fear, no love, or gratitude, can reach effectually the weak, unstable mind."

Here I paused from feeling, and for want of breath; they were neither of them in a condition to speak; so I soon resumed, but in a different tone, in this manner. "If your husband," I said, "had persisted in his original resolution, to take the Sacra-

ment in the church last Sunday, the awe of it would have dwelt, perhaps, upon his thoughts, and would have kept him, surely, for a few days, in a state of preparation, at least as good as when I last talked to him on the subject; and then who knows what other excellent consequences might have ensued? But it is probable that God would have blessed the act with all those consequences which he appointed it to be the means of conveying to us. Do not imagine, therefore, that it is well for your husband not to have taken the Sacrament in the church. It is ill, very ill for him indeed, to have broken his resolution, and to have done despite to the Spirit of grace, by esteeming it so lightly; and the more especially as, instead of purifying himself to be a fit temple for that Spirit to dwell in, he resorted rather to the debasing company of the drunkards, the adulterers, and the infidels. What shall God do now to recover him out of the snare of the devil, if his mercy once more triumph over his justice? Shall he cast him a second time on the bed of death, and react every agonising scene again? To what purpose? Will not a repetition weaken the effect; and will not your husband rebel more and more?"

I was now rising to the same pitch as before; but seeing the poor man apparently much dismayed, and needing comfort, as it seemed, rather than any further rebuke, I moderated myself again, and said, "But your case, Mr. Turner, is still not hopeless. Blessed be God, the frequenting by choice the society of the wicked after so signal a mercy; the abstaining from the Sacrament, when you were under a vow to receive it; nay, even the receiving it unworthily; none of these are unpardonable sins. Undoubtedly



such conduct is an aggravation of past wickedness, and may well provoke the severest temporal judgments; but it is still pardonable, blessed be God for it! It does not necessarily call down eternal condemnation. The blood of Christ, at length worthily received, will still wash it out; the Spirit of grace, communicated in the Sacrament, is still able to renew the divine image in the soul. But what godly sorrow and remorse must precede this change! What self-denial and self-humiliation! What fear and trembling! Yes, the foot, the hand, the eye, must be sacrificed, before you can stand again where you stood six days hence. But, if you will, it may all yet be done. With God nothing is impossible."

By this time I had exhausted myself; and there being no hope of bringing the man back to short questions and answers, which would have been probably a more useful process, if it had been possible, it struck me, that it might be better to get rid of him at once, if I could, and in his absence to have some private conversation with Mrs. Turner; so I said, "I have told you now all that I deem most essential in your present circumstances. I should suppose that your business required your attention out of doors, I will detain you no longer. Do not wait out of civility to *me*." He had risen, and was standing still, irresolute to go, or stay; but his chief difficulty seemed to be, what he should say to me upon quitting the house. "Do not trouble yourself to answer me," I resumed. "Think over my arguments and admonitions seriously by yourself whilst you are at your work. I will pray for you; do *you* pray for yourself. You are on the brink of a most fearful precipice. Spend this evening at home, and read my

books." Upon this he departed with his lips quivering, and his heart full of anguish, I doubt not. He left the doors open; his wife followed him to shut them, and soon returned into the inner room, where we had been sitting; and before I had decided how to begin the conversation with her, she began herself.

"My poor husband," she said, with seeming sorrow, "is an easy, good-humoured, good-natured man; one too ready to listen to others, and to be led by them, against his own better judgment." "I wish he would listen to *me*," I replied, "and be led by me agreeably to his own better judgment of the truth and superior excellence of my advice." "And so he would, Sir," she rejoined, "if you were always with him; but these bad people beset him constantly. He meets them every hour; his business carries him amongst them; he has accounts to settle with them; and you see now, Sir, yourself, pretty well, what is likely to be the effect of such a perpetual temptation. Besides, Sir, I am sorry to tell you, that they are continually ridiculing and abusing *you* in his presence; in order to weaken his confidence in you, and to bring him to think, that what you say to him is not in earnest, but only your trade. And they would persuade him too, Sir, that our religion itself is all a farce; and that a future world is only a bugbear to frighten children and old women. Nor is *this* the whole story, Sir. They are trying also to make him discontented with his condition, and an enemy to his king and the laws; that he may be the more ready, when an opportunity comes, to join with them in seizing upon the property of the rich folks, and in putting down all the great men, as well as

good old King George himself. Ah! Sir, there is a great deal more at work than you are aware of; and it will burst out one day soon, I fear. I tremble now to think of it, and what will become of us all. They will pull down the churches first, Sir."

Thus Mrs. Turner: and she spoke all this with a tone of so much feeling and propriety, that you would naturally think her to be in earnest, and one deeply concerned at the prospect before us. But some suspicions had arisen in my mind with respect to her real sentiments. These suspicions however I did not openly discover to her on the present occasion, but I judged it more prudent to explore my way a little further before I took any decisive step. "Well, Mrs. Turner," I said, "and if they pull the churches down, what does it signify to *you*? You know, that you made no use of the church for many, many years, except to be married there; and in future, I suppose, the people will think it just as good to make their vows before a justice of the peace as before their God; or perhaps they will go together like the brute beasts without any ceremony at all."

"God forbid, Sir," she exclaimed, with a voice and look of the same concern as before: "and as for myself, I have been at church lately, as you are very well aware, Sir." "Yes," I said, "but you stopped short, when it was most important to come there again; and to testify by a solemn act upon what foundation your faith and hope are built; after being prepared for that act too in such a manner as few others have been, and having a perfect understanding of all the mighty benefits to be procured by it. If you had known no more about it, than that it was a divine command; that it was appointed by

*him*, to whom you owe the possibility of being pardoned for your sins ; that he appointed it to commemorate his death, by which alone your pardon could be obtained ; and that he appointed it on the very night before he suffered that death, thus giving it all the effect of a dying command of the greatest benefactor ; if you had known no more than this, yet I should have thought that love and gratitude towards *him*, without any idea of benefit for yourself, would have produced a ready compliance with his will. And, if your unworthiness at first made you pause to come to his holy table, I should have thought also, that the same love and gratitude would have stirred you up to strive to conquer every difficulty, and to remove every impediment that stood in your way ; so that of unworthy you might soon have become worthy, and to serve and please him the better, you might have come at least with clean hands, and a pure heart, in all the beauty of holiness. Is this bright hope extinguished ? And have *you* too, like your wretched husband, abandoned yourself to sin and death ?”

For some time Mrs. Turner was quite unable to answer these questions, and her eyes were fixed upon the ground in silent thought, but evidently disturbed and anxious. At length she looked up, and said, “ My sins, Sir, were never great ones, as you very well know ; and I should hope, they are not likely to be greater than they were.” “ No, Mrs. Turner,” I replied, “ I do not pretend to know any such thing ; but I tell you, before I proceed further, that if your sins were ever so little, they would be quite large enough to condemn you, and exclude you from heaven, if you die in them without repentance, and without obtaining a share in the merits of your

Saviour. And I should think that *they* care little about God, or their Saviour, who never honour God in his own house, or their Saviour at his own table. This is very nearly *your* case, Mrs. Turner; the latter circumstance, indeed, suits you exactly; you have been two or three times at church, it is true; but your absence last Sunday, without any other reason than that it was Sacrament Sunday, is a bad omen of your future intentions. Whilst this disposition continues, I would advise you not to estimate your sins at a low rate. They are great, Mrs. Turner, very great; assure yourself of *that*; and think not that you will stop here. Depend upon it, you will glide insensibly, or, perhaps, plunge headlong, into still greater sins, from which the grace of God might preserve you, if you took the right methods of seeking it."

To all this I had no reply; and I drew one melancholy inference from it, that at all events she was determined to give no pledge as to her future conduct. She might have said, that she intended henceforth to be regular at church; at least till the church was pulled down; and that by degrees, perhaps, she might begin to consider herself fit for the Sacrament; but as she said nothing at all, I concluded that such an amendment of her conduct was not a steady object of her intentions. "Well, Mrs. Turner," I resumed, as she was silent; "with respect to your poor husband, you seem to think, that if I were offener with him, I might cause the scale to turn in favour of virtue and religion; but you are, yourself, or might be, more with him than anybody else can possibly be; and have *you* no influence over him, no means of causing him to prefer his home and his own fire-

side to the alehouse, and *your* company to the company of the wicked? I should wish to know what steps you take to retain him in his good resolutions; for some good resolutions he has undoubtedly made, and kept too for a time; I hope it was not your fault that he broke the last."

Here she was roused, and exclaimed with some appearance of warmth, "My fault, Sir? I hope I am not answerable for my husband's conduct. No; indeed, I have nothing to do with it; it does not concern *me*, except that I suffer by it." "I am afraid," I said calmly, "that you will find, some time or other, that you are concerned in your husband's conduct much more than you are willing to imagine, and far beyond any present suffering which it may occasion you." "How so, Sir?" she asked impatiently. "Why," I said, "to tell you the truth, Mrs. Turner, it seems to *me* an incredible thing, that he could have failed in his duty so astonishingly, and so soon as he has done, if you had used any proper endeavours to hold him firm to his engagements; and if it should turn out, upon investigation, that, instead of doing so, you were the first of the two to declare against taking the Sacrament in the church, as you prevented him before for some time from taking it privately during his sickness; and that, in consequence of your declaration, he renounced his own intention of taking it, and then ceased to be watchful over his behaviour, and so was more easily misled; unquestionably I should look to *you* as the prime cause of all his subsequent misfortunes and guilt. The very least, however, that might be laid to your charge would be this, that you discouraged him, by your example, from trying the only experiment which

held out a probable chance of saving him from ruin here and hereafter. He was in a great crisis ; the balance was evenly poised, or rather it inclined the right way ; with your additional weight your husband's scale might have reached the ground ; without it, it flew up, and kicked the beam."

I had now merely stated a supposition. With *her* readiness she would have contradicted it, if she could with truth ; and it would have been of no use to contradict it falsely, because she knew very well that I could learn the real fact from her husband, whenever I wished it. I assumed, therefore, that my supposition was correct, and I proceeded immediately thus :—" But it is possible, Mrs. Turner, that you may have gone beyond what I have yet said ; that, in declaring against the Sacrament for yourself, you may have stated reasons which applied to *him*, which he may have too eagerly caught up, and acted upon. Nay, you may have gone, for aught I know, even beyond this ; you may not only have influenced him by your example, and by the reasons which decided your own conduct, you may have actually dissuaded and terrified him from executing his intentions, by suggesting and urging reasons and fears, which were most likely to decide *his* conduct also. But if so, you are clearly answerable in a much higher degree for all the bad consequences which may ensue. They are known to God now, and recorded in his book, and one day, perhaps, you will be startled with hearing them brought forth against you ; and your husband himself, who was so ready to listen to you in an evil moment, will then be the first to accuse you to your face. ' One word from *you*,' he might then, perhaps, justly say, ' one single word from *you* would

have been enough ; I should have staid at home ; I should have gone to church ; I should have kept all my resolutions.' Yes, he might say of *you* as Adam did of Eve, when he was sore pressed by the questions of his great Almighty Judge, 'The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the fruit of the tree, and I did eat ;' she encouraged rather than opposed my bad appetites, and if I vowed a vow, she induced me to break it ; she is the cause of my standing here."

I paused for an instant, that she might deny my hypothesis, if she thought fit to do so. She did not do it, and I concluded again that I had conjectured rightly. Meanwhile, however, she seemed often to curb herself with great difficulty, and often I expected to be interrupted with an attempt on her part to contradict me, or to defend the propriety of her conduct. But, whatever might be the cause, she was silent throughout, and even when I stopped ; yet she champ'd the bit, like a steed impatient of restraint, and eager to let loose his force. Presently I continued thus : "Then, as concerns myself, Mrs. Turner, may I ask, whether you have aided and abetted, or not, in lowering my character, and in representing all the pains which I have taken for you, as mere professional trade, without any serious view to your temporal and eternal welfare ?" "No, *that* I have not, Sir," she cried out vehemently ; "I never thought of such a thing as *that*. I was always sure enough that you were in earnest, and that you intended us the greatest good." "When I brought you the money, for instance," I said, "which your kind neighbours subscribed to restore your ruined affairs, you thought me in earnest, perhaps ; did you



not?" This keen reproach she could not bear; she burst into tears, and exclaimed, "You need not have reminded me of *that*, Sir; I considered you to be equally in earnest in every thing." "Why, Mrs. Turner," I said, "if I had not been very much in earnest, I suppose that I need not have visited you so often, nor talked with you at such great length, nor have pressed you, as I did, against your inclination, to take the Sacrament, and to walk in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless. It is plain that you would have been contented with much less, and that a more sparing, quiet, official way of discharging my duty would have pleased you better, without any life or spirit in it to awaken some of my own seriousness in *your* breast also. But, perhaps, whilst you gave me credit for being in earnest, you pitied my mistaken zeal. Some new lights have broken in upon you, and you can now see, that the Master whom I wished you to serve, either existed not at all, or existed only to deceive us; that we want no Saviour of any description; in short, that we have nothing to save; that this world is the be-all and the end-all, and, therefore, that we may safely join with those who say, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

"*Those* are not *my* opinions, I assure you, Sir," she exclaimed again. "*My* opinions are of a different sort. I know very well that I have a soul to be saved, and it will be hard work for them to make *me* think otherwise. My blood runs cold, Sir, sometimes, when I hear them talk, as they do, about burning all the bibles, and things even worse than *that*." "But why should you hear them talk in that manner, my good woman?" I said. "It would be better to keep out of their way. If what they say is so

odious to you, I should think that the sight of them must be odious too, and that you would fly from them as you would from a serpent, whose bite is deadly. Indeed they do the work of the old serpent, the devil himself. If you are wise, and really wish for the comforts of the Gospel, you should never suffer such persons to pass your threshold."

At my first sentences she held down her head, as if she were convicted of not disliking such conversation so much as she pretended to do; but by the time I had finished, she was prepared with an answer, and she said with seeming grief, "Ah! Sir, I cannot do as I would. In that respect it is the same nearly with *me* as with my husband. Business must be done, and we must do it with those who choose to do it with *us*. Nor can we prevent them from coming to the house, or from speaking what they will." "But at all events," I rejoined, "you need not encourage them, by appearing to listen to them with satisfaction. And I should think that, if they met with no encouragement, and, much more, if you shewed that such conversation was disagreeable to you, they would soon leave it off, and plague you no further. Your husband, it seems, goes by choice into this nest of hornets, and, of course, he must expect to hear the same subjects talked of by the same persons in other places, as well as in the alehouse. But they have no claim upon *you*, unless you yourself concede it to them by a tame submission to their impieties. How is it, Mrs. Turner? Do you contend with them when they broach their doctrines, and endeavour to fortify your husband in his Christian principles; or what?"

"Oh! Sir," she answered at once, "my husband

wants none of my fortifying ; he knows more of the matter than I do by far ; I cannot contend with any body ; I am puzzled immediately." "Then," I said, "you have an additional motive for keeping out of the way, and not exposing your faith to such a shock. It will soon be shaken, and perhaps overthrown altogether, if you sit to hear objections raised against the Gospel, which you cannot answer yourself, and which, in consequence, they will call unanswerable, and endeavour to persuade *you* to think the same. You are wrong, Mrs. Turner, very wrong indeed ; and if you do not break through this system, it will end in your becoming an infidel, take my word for it." "No, Sir," she replied positively, "there is no danger of *that*, I am sure. I shall never become an infidel ; no, nor a jacobin neither. I abhor such characters."

Notwithstanding this declaration, I must confess that my suspicions in regard to Mrs. Turner's principles were now considerably increased ; and a fact occurred in the following week which confirmed them in a very high degree. On the present occasion I said but little more to her before I took my leave, except to warn her, over and over again, of her own and her husband's danger, and to exhort her to take especial care that the remorse which he appeared to feel when he left the house, should not be rendered ineffectual by any fault of hers. "Keep him at home," I added, "according to my advice, and read my books, and, above all, your Bible, together ; and pray that your faith fail not ; and come to church."

§ 4.—*Mr. Barking, the Stranger, and the Same.*

WE parted by no means satisfactorily, and I augured very ill of the result. The only chance of anything like success seemed to *me* to depend upon her wishing to retain my favour, and to avoid the imputation of assisting in her husband's ruin. What passed privately between them I know not ; but on the following Sunday he was at church, and unaccompanied by *her*. I saw him enter long after the commencement of the service, when we were all standing up. Guilt was visibly marked in his countenance. He looked like one who thought that every eye was fixed upon him ; that his fall was known to every body ; and that the surprise was universal to see him there. So he appeared anxious to find a seat as soon as possible, and would have thrust himself in amongst the poorer people who occupied the open benches in the passages ; but they did not make way for him, and he was obliged to move onwards and onwards, more and more distressed, till I made a signal to the beadle to provide for him a pew ; which was at length accomplished ; but he never seemed to recover his serenity. What a contrast between his behaviour now, and when he came first after his sickness ! Then he came with a face betokening gratitude, and hope, and joy : now with one of shame and fear, which betrayed the consciousness of mercies abused, and of vengeance provoked. But I thought it proper that he should be encouraged ; so I directed the beadle to stop him, when the service was over, and I commended him for his attendance, and enquired after his wife. " I hoped," I said, " to have seen you both together." In

answer he muttered some excuse for her which I did not understand, and we separated immediately. "This man," I thought with myself, "will come no more to church, unless some very great change take place in his mind and heart, which has not been wrought to-day."

About the middle of the week I passed his house, rather late in the afternoon, to visit a patient beyond. I saw Mrs. Turner through the open door sitting in her first room, and reading something apparently with the utmost attention. I went by without disturbing her, and upon my return I found her still engaged in a similar manner. Upon which I tapped at the door, and walked straight in at once. Up she jumped in a great bustle, when my step had roused her, and she saw who her visitor was. She made a movement, too, as if she would have put all her little books and papers aside; but suddenly recollecting herself, and being aware, I suppose, that the attempt to put them aside might justly excite a suspicion in my mind as to their contents, and her own agreement in opinion with them, she altered her intention, and cried out plausibly enough, "Oh! Sir, I am glad you are come? it is a lucky moment; see here, Sir, some of the wicked books and other things that we told you of; in a short time the greater part of them would have been gone; I was just looking at them out of curiosity before the gentleman called to take them away."

Without speaking, I turned them all over so as to read their titles; and I would have torn them instantly into a thousand tatters, if I had not thought it necessary to preserve them for a time, in order to shew more effectually the ridiculous absurdity of some, and the monstrous impiety of others. With great diffi-

culty, however, did I check the storm of indignation which had begun to rage in my breast ; and I enquired, with as much composure as I could, who this gentleman might be, who furnished them with such pestilential fare. " Oh ! Sir," she answered, " I am not acquainted with him at all ; he never told me who he was ; but he comes from the town," (calling it by its name,) " once a week ; and though I dislike his errand, yet, to give the devil his due, he is very civil in his manners, and a very proper gentleman. He will take these, and leave another set, Sir."

" What, then," I said angrily, and for a moment unable to curb myself, " you are not sufficiently surfeited and disgusted with these, Mrs. Turner, but that your vitiated appetite craves after more of the same noxious food ?" At once it struck her, that she had betrayed herself, by telling me so incautiously that the man was to leave her another set ; and she tried to correct the blunder by saying, " Why, Sir, I have no doubt he will offer me another set ; but I need not take them, if you think that I had better not. I only just skim them over to see how the world goes."—" I wish you would skim your Bible, Mrs. Turner," I said sarcastically, " in the same manner ; I ask for nothing more ; you would soon become wise unto salvation. Never did I see a person engaged in a deeper study, or apparently more wrapt up in close attention to any thing, than yourself, both when I passed your house, and when I returned a few minutes ago. Would that it had been your Bible, God's holy book, upon which you were so intent, rather than these blasphemies, which are the inventions of the devil himself ! God forgive you, Mrs. Turner ! God forgive you !"

The moment she heard that I had seen her before at

her studies, her cheeks flushed with scarlet, and the conviction smote her at once, that I should consider her as having forfeited all pretensions to truth. But the solemnity with which I invoked God to forgive her, seemed also to pierce her to the quick. Her lips quivered; she trembled all over; and not a syllable could she utter, even to defend herself. All defence, indeed, she knew, must be entirely useless with me, because, whatever it might be, I should not now be disposed to believe it. After a short pause, however, I continued thus: "Why, Mrs. Turner, you are determined, I see, to vie with your husband in learning how the world goes. What a pity that decency forbids you to accompany him to the pot-house, and to sit there smoking, and drinking, and singing, and talking, or hearing others talk, sedition and blasphemy! *There* you might enjoy it to perfection. However you get a feast of it quietly and snugly at home; and this itinerant gentleman is so kind as to open your mind for you to enable you to perceive, and comprehend, all the beauties and excellencies of these writings, which might otherwise escape your notice. But I am sinning myself, whilst I speak with this apparent levity. These doings of yours are an abomination to me," I exclaimed indignantly, "and they will be your own ruin and destruction. What? Would you dethrone God; tread your Redeemer under your feet; extinguish all religion; overthrow all law and government; let loose the reins to every bad passion and appetite; plunder the property of the rich; wade in the blood of the highest, the noblest, and the best of your fellow-creatures? If you do not see how these publications lead naturally, and almost necessarily, to such effects, I pity you; if

you do, and yet encourage them, and make them your chief study, your guilt is greater than I almost dare to say ; you are heaping sin upon sin ; you are treasuring up for yourself a deeper condemnation."

What her feelings were at this moment, and what answer she intended to give me, I do not know. In her countenance and gestures I saw evident marks of rage, but of rage somewhat suppressed, I thought, by shame and fear ; and she was preparing to speak, when her choked utterance might permit it. However, her husband entered just in this very crisis ; his horses having been put up for the evening, and all the business of the day being finished. His wife's face and mine, together with the sight of the papers lying on the floor, as I had scattered them about in my wrath, made known to him at once the state of the case precisely as it was. Besides, he had heard the close of my last sentence, as he came in, and probably more, when he was yet at a distance ; for the warmth of the moment had elevated my voice beyond the key of conversation to that of argumentative vehemence. However, at first he stood aghast ; looking now at one, now at the other, and then at the unfortunate papers ; but at length he ventured to enquire, how I had been offended so deeply. " Do you ask ?" I said, with a tone of surprise. " What papers are these ? Tell me *that*." He stooped to gather them up, and whilst he was doing it, he informed me, that some of them were brought by Mr. Barking in the way which he had once mentioned to me, and the rest by the town-emissary, whom he described after his own manner. " But I should wish, Sir, if you please," he added, " to hear your opinion of them in the back-room. There are some better chairs there, Sir, for



you to sit upon, if you can spare the time ; and we need not let any body in to disturb you." I understood this in a favourable sense. It discovered, I thought, a certain degree of shame still operating in the man's breast, and a desire to conceal from the neighbourhood the fact of their possessing and reading these ungodly publications, which drew down my anger upon them. So I said, " By all means ; let us go in, and sit down ; but to tell you the truth, Mr. Turner, I think there is no small risk in doing so. The dwelling, which harbours these, may well expect to be crushed by the thunder-bolt." At this he started, and turned pale, and would have cast his papers on the ground again ; but I took them from him to examine their titles once more, and carried them within, and laid them on a table, near which was a chair. They followed me in, and shut the door after them, and then sat down, as I had done, but in a distant corner.

The uppermost paper, as they now lay, was a parody on the ten commandments. I had heard of it, but I had never seen it before ; nor did I read more of it now, than just enough to shew me what it was. " Aye," I exclaimed, " here are God's own holy commands, awfully pronounced by his own terrible voice from the top of Mount Sinai, and written on two tables of stone by his own finger, whilst lightnings and thunderings shook the mountain itself to its very foundations ; and shall not the same dreadful arms of the divine vengeance strike the impious tongue which dictated, and the impious hand which wrote a ridicule of such sacred, such adorable things ?" Thus I began with a solemnity which held them mute with expectation and with terror ; and I was about to proceed in the same strain, but a

loud knocking at the outer door interrupted me. It had been left open ; so the person who knocked advanced into the middle of the front room, and called out lustily, " Mr. Turner, Mr. Turner, where are you ? We are late, we are late ; we shall lose the first game at the Bull ; make haste, make haste." " Ha ! ha !" I thought with myself ; " there is gambling too at this same Bull, it seems ;" and I stop just to say, that having afterwards ascertained the fact, as well as the natural consequences of it, namely, the ruin of several individuals, and of one more especially with a large family, I applied to the magistrates to take away the licence from the landlord, which they did at the first opportunity.

But to return. At the sound of the well-known voice, Mr. and Mrs. Turner jumped up in confusion, and said to each other, but loud enough for me to hear them, " It is Mr. Barking ! What *shall* we do ? It is very unlucky !" " Perhaps not," I answered ; " sit you still, and leave him to *me*." So I rose, and opened the inner door ; and my sudden, unexpected appearance astonished Mr. Barking not a little, who stepped back immediately, and would have quitted the house without speaking another word ; but I said rather good humouredly, as I wished to prevail upon him to stay, " Oh ! do not go away so hastily, Mr. Barking ; there is a charge against you here within ; pray come and answer it ; only, perhaps, you are afraid of being in the same room with a parson." " Not I indeed," he answered carelessly ; " but who is it that charges *me* ? And what is the offence ? I should like to know *that*."

During this he had followed me in ; and having scarcely given him time to look into the corner for

Mr. and Mrs. Turner, I asked him, if he was the person, to whom we were indebted for bringing the papers upon the table into the parish for our edification. "Yes, a good many of them, I believe," was his answer. "What they call the 'parodies' were thrown into my gig. Have you any fault to find with them? They are very harmless, it is *my* opinion, except that they almost killed me with laughing at them." "You learnt in your youth, Mr. Barking," I said, "to repeat the Lord's Prayer by heart; did you not?" He assented. "And you probably *did* repeat it, on your knees too, both morning and night?" I continued. "I don't know but I may have done so," he answered; "and what of that?" "Why," I said, "at that time, I doubt not, it would have struck you with horror, if any one had told you, that there had been written a mockery of this prayer. You would not have thought it a harmless thing; you would not have endangered your life by laughing at it! Ah! you would have cried, forbear! Touch not this sacred prayer with your licentious wit! It is the work of Heaven itself. Let it not be the sport of your impious tongues and pens! It is what Jesus Christ, (and I bowed my head at the adorable name,) our blessed Lord and Saviour, taught us. It is not a fit vehicle for your jests, your scoffs; and your ribaldry. Lord, teach *us* to pray, said Christ's disciples with a discreet and pious humility; and then he taught them this simple, yet exact and beautiful form of prayer, which is at once the noblest model of true devotion and of comprehensive matter; combining, as it does, within a narrow compass, all the chief wants and necessities of mankind, whether temporal or spiritual. What do you find here to

assail with scurrility and abuse? Ah! forbear! you are playing with a thunder-bolt; you are provoking the extraordinary vengeance of Heaven; it were better for you, if you had never been born! It were better for you, if a millstone were hanged about your necks, and that you were drowned in the depths of the sea."

Here I paused from intensity of feeling, as was continually the case, before I came to any proper conclusion. But, as in some cases, I was not disabled from marking my auditory. Turner, the best of them, wept copiously, and bowed, as I did, at the sacred name of Jesus. I was touched with this unexpected token of his Christian spirit, as I always am, when I see the same effect from the pulpit. I bow there by habit in the utterance of that name; and my own awe increases, when I behold some devout hearer, whose eye is fixed upon my countenance, caught by the example, and bowing also. I am sure that I preach to that man's heart. So I did now to Turner's. But what saith the Scripture? As weak as water, thou shalt not excel. Such a man was Turner.

His wife I could not satisfactorily comprehend. She had been guilty, I thought, of gross dissimulation, and even of falsehood; so that it appeared to be a more difficult thing to explain any insulated circumstance of behaviour in such a woman; however, all the anger which her countenance betokened, when her husband first entered, seemed now to have vanished; and I was willing to think that I saw some symptoms of remorse; but they were not so strikingly marked as to make me very sanguine of a happy result. There was no tear; no word expres-

sive of sorrow ; no promise of rejecting with a proper scorn any future offer of such profane writings. But there was the downcast look ; there was the fear of meeting my eye ; there was the posture, which no frequency of change could make easy. She raised her eye, but in an instant she depressed it again ; she tried a new posture, but soon returned to the old.

As to Mr. Barking, his fool-hardy confidence was manifestly smitten down to the ground. The whole scene was like a sudden clap of thunder to him—thunder from a serene and cloudless sky. In the midst of his anticipations of cards, and dice, and bacchanalian revels, and a triumph over religion, he found himself unexpectedly and instantaneously shut up in a narrow apartment with one of God's ministers, and his own early feelings appealed to in defence of that holy prayer, the reverence of which was not yet obliterated by a long neglect, or even by a determined career of habitual sin. In my own mind I secretly blessed the kind Providence which had suggested to me to try his strength with this topic first. It changed at once the whole manner of the man. Instead of assailing me with vulgar abuse, and shocking my ears with an indecent raillery of sacred things, and beating me down with intemperate and angry violence, as he would naturally have done, and as I fully expected, he was quite speechless ; the way in which he had been made himself to apostrophise and rebuke the infidel Parodists seemed almost to have enlisted him on the side of religion ; the earnestness and solemnity of my tone and gesture, my bowing at the name of Jesus, the tremendous denunciations at the end, struck him with an

aws unfelt for many a year ; his eyes were rivetted upon me ; and, whilst his tongue was dumb, his face spoke intelligibly enough, ' What if I myself be one of these ! ' And when this terrible thought darted through his head, the hue of his red and bloated cheeks underwent a sudden alteration which it is not easy to describe ; he trembled too, and looked behind him for a chair, and seemed recruited and refreshed the moment that he sat down upon it.

I did not follow his example, but remained standing ; because it both prompted me and enabled me to speak with the greater force, and to aid the sentiment by action. I resumed the tenor of my discourse, and endeavoured to preserve and improve the advantage which I had gained in this manner. " Your expostulation upon the Lord's Prayer, Mr. Barking, could not fail, I should think, of producing a great and wholesome effect upon those foolish men, or rather madmen, as you perhaps would justly call them. And when you had thus vindicated the work of God from their ludicrous and impious perversions of it, you would probably have gone on to vindicate our prayer-book, which, although it be but the work of man, is full of heavenly wisdom and heavenly piety, and which, no doubt, you revered in your youth. ' Is there any thing irrational and absurd in those sacred forms of worship,' you might have exclaimed, ' that they should be derided and vilified by you ? They have stood the test of ages. If there be anything of sufficient worth for frail and sinful beings, like *us*, to offer up to a Being, like God, of infinite perfection, and power, and mercy, you will find it in the Liturgy of our Church ; it contains all the interests of a Christian society, and

everything for which any individual Christian ought to pray. Bring it not into contempt, therefore, by your scurrilous parodies of it. All the wise and devout unite in beseeching God to preserve it in use, and honour, and veneration for ever. Bring it not into contempt, therefore, lest they, whom you teach first to despise it, should in the end reject it altogether, as well as Christianity itself. You are shooting arrows against Heaven, which will one day return upon your own heads with tenfold vengeance. You are scattering firebrands amongst men, which will consume yourselves. It were better for you, I repeat the warning, it were better for you, if you had never been born; or that a millstone were hanged about your necks, and you were drowned in the depths of the sea!"

None of my auditory attempted to speak when I stopped here; so I continued instantly. "This second expostulation of yours, Mr. Barking, would rescue the prayer-book, I should hope, from profane ridicule and mockery, as your first might have done the Lord's Prayer. But perhaps you would have been somewhat more particular upon that part of the Liturgy which contains the ten commandments. You would have reminded these scoffers of what I was mentioning to Mr. and Mrs. Turner, just at the moment of your arrival; with how much terrific pomp and majesty the delivery of the ten commandments was accompanied; that the Most Highest himself descended from Heaven upon the mountain, shrouded in clouds and thick darkness; that lightnings flashed from amidst the clouds, and thunderings shook the mountain; and that the whole host of Israel, sanctified for this solemn scene, and summoned by the blast

of the heavenly trumpet, came trembling, and bowed themselves to the earth in humble adoration and worship. Will ye dare, then, you might have said, will ye dare to point at these commandments with the finger of scorn, which God wrote with his own finger, and which bear God's own stamp upon them in their very nature and reasonableness? If you acknowledge that there are duties owing to *him* and your neighbour, where will you find them pronounced with more plainness, with greater brevity, with a more commanding divine authority? What is it then that you would deride? That there is one God; and that we must worship *him* only as he is; and hallow his holy name and Sabbaths; is there any thing ridiculous in this? And with respect to our neighbour, that we must abstain from violating his property, his reputation, and his life, and what is dearer to him than life itself, the wife of his bosom, the partner of his joys and sorrows; is there anything so unreasonable in these things as to make them a fit subject for laughter?"

As I said this I fixed my eyes steadfastly upon Mr. Barking, and I saw that he was touched to the quick, and flinched from the lash which I gave him, and he knew not how to sit upon his chair; so without a moment's pause, I thrust further home in this manner. "Nay," I exclaimed in a louder and more awful tone, "if there be any crimes which deserve the vengeance of hell-fire, do not adultery and murder deserve it? And will you dare, impiously and madly, to jest upon God's prohibition of these crimes? Thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; saith the Almighty Lord, who is a



consuming fire to destroy the transgressors. Will ye mock at this ?”

Mr. Barking was unable to endure such an attack for a moment longer. Up he started in utter confusion and terror, his conscience stinging him, as it should seem, with scorpions ; and having snatched his hat from the table with a wild gesture, and stammered out some incoherent, false excuse for his abrupt departure, he disappeared in an instant ; and as he is no further concerned in this dialogue, I will tell the remainder of his history before I finish the paragraph. It is terrible ; it is merciful. A stroke of palsy, blow after blow, smote him in the midst of his iniquities, first one side, next the other side, then the whole body at once. For three years God imprisoned him, in pain and agony, to the sick-bed ; but, happily for himself, he watered it with the tears of penitence ; sighs and groans were his constant companions ; but, I trust, they reached heaven. I visited him often ; often I administered the Sacrament to him, and afforded him all the consolations of our holy faith ; and at length he died in hope. Listen, ye scoffers, and beware !

As soon as the door was shut, and I had recovered a little from the agitation into which this striking scene had thrown me, I looked round towards the Turners, and observing the dismay which was pictured on their countenances, I said calmly, but sorrowfully, “ What now would that man give, if his own heart did not condemn him ? What would he give to be innocent as in his youth, when he revered the Lord’s Prayer and the Ten Commandments ! ” “ The whole world, Sir, if he had it

to give!" exclaimed Mr. Turner, with his hands lifted up, and his face as pale as ashes. "It would be a rich exchange for him," I rejoined; "but mark his history, and let it be a lesson to you both. His lusts and appetites, bursting their bounds, made him an adulterer; his religion tormented him with the threat of a future judgment, so he cast it off; he became an infidel, and renounced all allegiance to his Saviour and his God; now he was ripe for every enormity, so he became a Radical, it seems, and would deluge his country in blood. Behold what a combination of horrors in a single man! Every bond, religious, political, moral, is too weak to restrain him; he snaps them all asunder; step by step he is advancing in the high, broad way to everlasting ruin. Ah! my friends, you are approaching it too. Retrace *your* steps, therefore, I beseech you, whilst you may; and, by God's help regain the narrow, but safe road, which will lead you to everlasting life and happiness."

Here Mrs. Turner interposed, after a long silence, and said, "Mr. Barking is a great sinner indeed, Sir; everybody knows *that*; I hope you do not put *us* in the same rank with *him*." "I cannot but form my opinion of all persons," I replied, "by the company which they keep. You are a great deal, both of you, with Mr. Barking; and if you were once ashamed of being seen with him, and are now ashamed of him before *me* at least, yet you seem to be linking yourselves closer and closer with him. What am I to think of this? I know that you have not kept pace with him in wickedness; you would not as yet unblushingly commit the same crimes; but, as I have told you before, you have vices enough to condemn you already, and you are doing your

best to acquire more, and you will not take the only measures which are likely to save you. Instead of your Bible, these wretched papers are your constant study ; these papers, which first cause you to laugh at your religion, and will afterwards root it out of your minds ; and then you will be a match for Mr. Barking, and prepared to go all lengths with him. See these other papers too. After reading these, do you feel the same loyalty towards your king as before ; the same hearty submission to the laws of your country ; the same contentment in your own station ? Will you not soon thirst for blood like Mr. Barking ? Have you not already divided amongst yourselves, in your imagination, the wealth of your richer neighbours, although they have shewn by their actions how willing they are to spend it upon you in your distresses ? If you go on to encourage and feed this atrocious spirit, I myself shall not be safe from your sacrilegious hands."

I had spoken with an earnestness and vehemence of manner which overwhelmed them ; but, when I uttered the last sentence, they both rose at once from their seats with strong marks of abhorrence, the husband especially, and began disclaiming together such a monstrous act of ingratitude as they conceived me to have imputed to them. "No, no," I exclaimed loudly, to drown both their voices, "I do not charge you with such heinous things ; you mistake me ; you are not ripe for them yet ; but they who *are*, are your bosom friends ; you live and talk with them daily ; you have no detestation of the men themselves ; how long will you detest their opinions and principles ? Not long, I should fear, with the assistance of *these papers*." "They shall do nobody

any further harm," cried Turner with warmth, whilst he grasped them fiercely, and cast a look at them which predicted their destruction. "I will burn them all instantly," he added, with an energy which was new to him, and was bearing them off accordingly. "Stay, stay," interposed his wife in a hurry, and seizing him by one arm—"What shall we say to the gentleman, if we burn his papers? I have been expecting him for the last half hour. Let him take his own property away with him, and do what he likes with it. It will be sufficient to tell him to come here no more." "No, no," he cried again, still retaining his energy, "*that* will never do. I have said it, and it shall be done; but it would be better if it were done by the hangman."

Upon this she loosed his arm, and he hastened with his bundle into the front room, where there was a fire, and threw it all at once, and without hesitation, into the grate; and then he kept stirring the loose papers about with the poker, until the flames caught hold of them successively. Mrs. Turner and myself had followed him, and we were now standing by. The conflagration, I must confess, pleased *me* well enough, and I did not scruple to applaud the act, by saying, that if others would pursue the same decisive measures, we should hear but little of such seditious and blasphemous publications. But, what is singularly astonishing, many well disposed persons, even parents and masters of families, were in the constant habit of admitting them into their houses, and suffering anybody to read them; and I remember very well, that I was first struck with the idea of the amazing mischief which they were calculated to produce, when I was told by a man of the most respectable rank

and character, far advanced in years, and very religious too, a man, in short, who never omitted the performance of any public religious duty, that, upon reading the parody of the Litany, he could not refrain from laughter. It did not endanger his life, perhaps, as it did Mr. Barking's; but that such a man could be so worked upon by these horrible impieties as even to smile at them was to *me* a terrible proof that everything the most dear to us, and most sacred in itself, might perish under the shafts of ridicule, or, at least, receive a dangerous wound.

The destruction of the papers was evidently by no means agreeable to Mrs. Turner, and she betrayed her uneasiness in a variety of ways, but chiefly by asking again and again, how she must excuse herself to the gentleman, who had lent them to her. "Make no excuses at all," I said, "but tell him the truth. Tell him that Dr. Warton, the rector of the parish, condemned them as wicked and mischievous, and that your husband in consequence burnt them, lest any other unwary eye might be contaminated by the sight of them."

After this we were all silent for a moment or two, watching the fire, when a gentle rap at the door drew our attention that way, and Mrs. Turner, in a great trepidation, but in an under tone, reiterated the words, "Here he is! here he is! as sure as can be. This is the gentleman! This is the gentleman! Now you may speak for yourself, Sir. I am glad that such a business is not left to *me* to explain to him."

Meanwhile the gentleman had knocked a second time, and somewhat louder than before; but Thomas was too busy, and Margaret too frightened and vexed to open the door for him. I believe she

wished *me* to do it, as I had done for Mr. Barking; but I was not so eager to encounter this stranger, of whose character and abilities I was quite ignorant; whom I supposed however to be some political demagogue, too well versed in all the topics of irritation, and a plausible as well as a fluent declaimer; so that the goodness of my cause might not be enough to put me upon a par with him.

At length, tired with waiting, and probably hearing some sounds within, he knocked a third time, and instantly opened the door himself, which had a handle on the outside; and his eyes being attracted at once by the blazing fire, he espied the printed papers in the act of being reduced to ashes, and Turner stirring them together with a sort of savage glee. "Hey-dey!" he exclaimed with a look and tone of surprise; "what are you about here?" Then advancing rapidly to the fire-place, he exclaimed again, with still more astonishment, "Why, some of those are my own papers! Are you burning *my* papers?" Upon saying this he looked round for an explanation; and at last Mrs. Turner, pointing to *me*, informed him, with many hems and haws, that I was Dr. Warton, the rector, that I had been on the point of tearing them to pieces myself; and that her husband was now burning them by my advice.

During her speech, and from his first entrance I had an opportunity of observing him; and the immediate remark which I made to myself was, that his person was extremely well known to me. I had seen him often apparently very busy in my parish, going into and coming out of various houses. We had passed each other frequently in the streets and roads, and had exchanged many a look of inquiry. I had asked too of several persons who he might be;

but as I never asked of the very persons whom he visited, and nobody else seemed to know anything about him, I remained in utter ignorance of the man himself, and of his occupations. Once or twice, when I crossed him, I stood still, and set myself to guess at his probable means of livelihood ; but I could not arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. That he was not a tradesman, I was sure ; because his whole air and manner, as well as his dress, were of a totally different description, and I never saw him with a parcel under his arm. That he was not a gentleman, I felt equally sure ; because the persons whom he visited were all of the lowest condition. The result of the present meeting threw no light upon the subject, as to his real rank in life ; and I never met him afterwards ; that he was an emissary from some root and branch reformers was evident. He seemed to be about forty ; he was very pale, but otherwise of a good countenance ; and he was tall of stature.

Well ; Mrs. Turner having pointed me out to him, and his eye having now met mine, I said immediately, " Why, we are old friends, Sir ; you know my person without doubt as perfectly as *I* know yours ; but at length I know much more ; the mystery is solved ; you are one of those patriots, it seems, who travel about to enlighten the ignorant ; or, in other words, to teach cobblers and tinkers how to mend the state." " I had the advantage of you, Dr. Warton," he replied, a little nettled. " There was no mystery about you. I knew you well, before I met you here, by your black coat, and a thousand other indubitable marks, to be one of those, who constantly oppose the march of intellect ; who bow, and cringe, and lick the dust, before rich patrons, and titled placemen ;

who preach up passive submission and obedience to crowned tyrants ; who would chain down the people in perpetual slavery, darkness, and superstition, that they may be content to toil and sweat for the privileged and pensioned few ; whilst we, the patriots, as you sarcastically call us, are lovers of our country, indeed, and would rouse our fellow-men to assert their own birthrights, and to seize upon the freedom and power which God and nature have given them. All men are born equal, Sir ; the rich are but usurpers and oppressors ; equality of rights, and privileges, and property, will alone satisfy the people of this land, and make them happy. These are the doctrines which I preach ; doctrines of eternal truth and justice ; and if you had read my books instead of burning them, your bigotry might, perhaps, have been gradually expelled by a more liberal spirit.”

This harangue was delivered with the full accompaniments of oratorical force and action, and it seemed to produce a great effect upon Mrs. Turner. I watched her particularly, because it was now clear enough that she was much more corrupted than her husband ; and she owed her corruption chiefly, as I supposed, to the conversation of the man who had just spoken, and to the pamphlets which he had persuaded her to read. I think, too, that she felt a little sort of malicious pleasure in hearing me, as she fancied, out-talked and put down. As for her husband, he appeared to understand very little about it, and to care still less. He would be loyal enough, so long as he could but get plenty of ale to muddle his head ; nor would he have any quarrel with Christianity or parsons, if they would but overlook his drunkenness



What was I now to do? Some reply was absolutely necessary; but a reply in the same style of bold assertion, on the contrary side, would manifestly be useless. The bad passions of our nature, yes, and some of the good ones too, would be all with *him*, and against *me*. And what hope was there that such a vague and indefinite declaimer would permit his wings to be clipped, and himself to be pinned down to make a simple answer to a simple question? This experiment, however, I determined to try; and, if possible, to bring about a discussion on some point or other, with respect to which it was important to the Turners, in the present state of the country and of themselves, that they should not be misled. But whatever I did, it behoved me to take especial care, that my authority over them should not be forfeited, or impaired.

As I had assailed this gentleman first, I had no right to be angry with him for attempting to turn the tables upon me; so I said with a smile, and with as much good humour and calmness as I could muster together, "It is very true, Sir; nobody, I believe, will ever mistake *me* for anything but what I am, a parson; and it is true also, that I partake of the general character of all parsons, to be in favour of what is established. Our education, our studies, our habits, our employments, our profession, our religion, all incline us towards peace and quiet; and rather to submit to many inconveniencies, of which we know the extent and the burden, than to run the risk of bringing upon ourselves still greater ones, which defy all previous calculation, by any violent attempt to improve, as we may suppose, the institutions of the state. Without violences the changes which *you*

meditate can never be accomplished. There must be civil convulsions, wars, and shedding of blood, in the field, and on the scaffold. How long this may last; how often it may be renewed; in what it may ultimately terminate, whether in a better or in a worse condition of things, than that from which we set out; are matters utterly inscrutable. We pause, therefore, with such a fearful uncertainty before us; and as we know that this short life is but the preparation for an eternal one; and that every individual is placed in such a situation here, be it what it may, as to enable him to provide effectually for that eternal one hereafter; in *our* judgment there is nothing else that deserves a moment's thought. *You* would urge men to grasp at riches and power; but what if riches and power should plunge their possessors into sins, which in poverty and obscurity would not have been committed? *We* dare not exhort men, therefore, to such perilous experiments, but only to contentment as they are; to patience, to resignation, to the performance of every duty which their station makes possible and proper, and thereby to better hopes in a better world. These are *my* doctrines, Sir, and the doctrines of that gospel, of which I am a humble minister; but, I fear, they are new to *you*; or, at least, that your heart does not beat in unison with them. I will come, therefore, if you please, Sir, to some of the objects, which you propose to us, as so grand and noble, and as likely to produce such unexampled happiness, but which I myself consider to be mere phantoms of the imagination, or absolutely unattainable. But we had better first go into the inner room, and sit down; we shall talk more quietly and coolly than we may do, perchance, whilst we stand here."

This gentleman, going about, as he did, a professed debater on political topics, could not well object to so reasonable a proposition ; and he was aware, no doubt, that, if he declined it, he would have the appearance of a vanquished man ; yet he did not seem to relish the thought by any means, and so he took out his watch, and started, and said, " I am pressed for time ; it is a great pity that I should lose such an opportunity of attacking prejudice and bigotry in one of its strongest holds ; but necessity has no law. I must go." " Yes, Sir," I replied laughingly, as if I saw through his pretence ; " it is, perhaps, better that you should ; and it would be better still, if you never came again. The burning of your papers does not promise you much success in this quarter, and you may depend upon it, Sir," I said, assuming a graver tone, " that, now I have discovered your practices, I shall be upon the alert to counteract them, and to expose your sophistries and fallacies. Besides, Sir, some of these papers of yours, in my opinion, are treasonable. It is well for you that they are burnt, and cannot appear against you. You may not be so fortunate another time. The hawkers of treason and blasphemy in my parish shall know that they are amenable to the laws of their country."

" You may threaten, as you will," he answered with difficulty ; for he was choking with rage ; " *you* have the upper hand now ; but your reign, I hope, will be short. *Our* turn will come next, and sooner perhaps than you imagine ; and then——and then——" he added at length, collecting all his fury, " destruction to the priests and hypocrites !" In an instant he was gone ; and he banged the door after him with such violence, that the house shook again.

"At last you see the cloven foot," I said calmly to Mr. and Mrs. Turner, who seemed to be lost in wonder at this abrupt termination of the debate; "he will trouble you no more, I am sure. But, lest you might think well of any of his schemes nevertheless, I will tell you what I was going to say to him, if he had stayed, and from one specimen you will judge of the rest."

As it seemed that they were both of them desirous to hear me, I began thus. "One of the papers just burnt, as I suppose you know very well, recommended an equal division of the land amongst the people; and this gentleman, if you remember, insinuated something of the same sort in the speech which he made to us; so, I presume, *that* is one of his schemes for the general improvement." "Oh! yes, Sir," said Mrs. Turner; "he was always talking about it." "And what quantity of land did he promise you?" I asked,— "One hundred acres, or how much?" "He named no particular quantity, Sir," she answered; "but he made it appear, that we should all have plenty." "Did he indeed?" I said. "Then he was either not honest, or not wise; to speak more plainly, knavish, or foolish. Do you know, Thomas, how many acres there are in this parish?" "No, Sir," he replied; "I never heard." "I will tell you then," I said. "There are 4000, more or less; and the number of souls amounts to nearly 20,000. Now let me see what sort of an arithmetician you are. Divide the land amongst them, and give me the result." Hereupon he began reckoning with his head, and his fingers; and in no long time he answered, "Why, Sir, there must be five to every acre." "It is very true," I said; "and what do you think of it?"

We commonly reckon five to a family ; so there will be one family to be fed, clothed, and lodged out of one acre." "That will never do, Sir," he replied ; "it is quite laughable." "Yes," I said, "and when the children grow up, and marry, and have families of their own, what will become of them all then ?" "Why, Sir," he answered jokingly, "they must cut the throats of some of them, or they must all starve together." "Aye," interposed his wife ; "but other parishes have not so many people as this ; so that there will be more land for each family than a single acre." "Yes," I said, "if those parishes are as large or larger ; but there are many parishes much smaller than ours with a still greater population. However, I will allow you five acres, if you like, for each family. Will not things soon come into the same state ?" She did not understand this ; so I asked her, whether the gentleman had not boasted, that, under his system, there would be no more wars to desolate mankind ; and that we should see our children, and children's children, like the stars of heaven, or the sand of the sea-shore, for multitude. "But if this be so," I said, "they must needs be straitened for land in a certain time even with their five acres." "Yes, Sir," she replied ; "but some families will not increase perhaps at all." "It is very likely," I said, "and the consequence will be this ; that the families, which do not increase, will be rich, and those which do, poor ; and thus your famous equality will be at an end immediately, and you will have riches and poverty again the same as now.

Here a little pause ensued, but soon she said, "However, Sir, it would be a pretty thing for us to have five acres to begin with in any case, and our

children might take their chance." "Well," I replied, "at that rate this parish would be allotted to eight hundred families, or four thousand persons. What would become of the remaining sixteen thousand? Must they leave their houses and their trades, and remove to their several allotments, in various parts of the kingdom; or what?" This question puzzled her; but at length she proposed, that they should remain where they were, and let their land to tenants, who might understand the management of it better than themselves. "Very well," I said, "then suppose the rent, if you please, to be twenty shillings an acre, which will be the utmost, if you take all the land of the kingdom into account, and each family will have five pounds a year, whilst they keep together; but when the parents die, and the three children marry and separate, they will have thirty-three shillings and four-pence a-piece; thus, you see, the property will begin to dwindle, and it will go on dwindling till it comes to nothing." "That is true, Sir," she replied; "but I shall have the benefit and the comfort of the five pounds a-year for my life; which is not to be scorned." "You will," I said; "and so this, after all, is the whole extent of this wonderful scheme for the happiness of mankind, that a little addition may be made to the poorer classes of the present generation, and in a few years all things will revert to their ancient state. But let us now see how these five acres are to be obtained, that we may consider the justice and feasibility of the thing. Of course they must be taken from somebody; must they not?" "Yes, Sir," she answered, "from somebody who has more than enough, and can afford to lose them." "Aye," I said, "but that is not all.

If this somebody had a thousand acres, and you took only five from him, although it would be unjust to do so, yet he might not suffer materially by the injury. But recollect there are other families besides yours have their allotments carved out of his estate ; so that if he does not lose it all, at the most he will have no more than five acres left to himself. Is not this the plan ?" She could not deny it. " Well then," I said, " let this somebody be Mr. Durant. You know he is very rich."

When I mentioned Mr. Durant's name she blushed, but her husband raised his hands, and cried out with great feeling, that he had rather go to the poor-house, than touch a single acre of Mr. Durant's. This gentleman had subscribed a handsome sum to relieve them in their distress. " But this scheme," I said, " can never be carried into effect without disregarding many a good feeling, besides that of gratitude. However, let *that* pass ; and tell me, if you recollect, what was the amount of the subscription in your favour." " Oh ! I shall never forget it, Sir," exclaimed Turner ; " it was one hundred and twenty pounds. Such kind actions do not happen every day. It saved us from the parish, Sir." " So then," I said, " if you had been in possession of the five acres you must have sold the whole, or a part of them, because the rent, being but five pounds, would not have been sufficient for your difficulties, and to have kept you from the parish ; and upon that supposition there would have been no Mr. Durants to help you ; they are all levelled with the meanest of you, and noble deeds of generosity and charity are at an end, so long, at least, as the system lasts. But you see by your own case that it would not last long. The

afflictions of Providence would have wrested your acres from you, and others would have gained them. In short, do what you will, God, you may depend upon it, will have both poor and rich to the end of the world. Have you considered all these things?"

Mrs. Turner was silent, but her husband confessed at once that they had not considered them at all, and that he now saw clearly that the plan would not do. "I suspect, Turner," I said, "that the plan was merely this: that property should change hands; that the rich should be driven from their estates, and reduced to poverty and daily labour, or even put to death, if they resisted, which it is most likely that they would; and that the poorer classes should get what they could in the general scramble. Not that all the poor would get something if the rich were destroyed, but only the cunning, the bold, and the wicked. When a nation is turned topsy-turvy, as it were, some few of that description succeed perhaps in getting money, estates, and power, but the great mass of the people remain in the same poverty as before. The demagogues tell them, indeed, like your friend, who has just left us in such a hurry, that they will all get something by the change; but, supposing the rich men to be killed, who will divide their lands amongst the poor? Who will make out lists, and settle which of the poor are to have shares? Who will determine which of the poor are to have shares in their own parishes, and which elsewhere? Who will work the lands, till all arrangements are made? Which of the poor themselves will wait patiently at home, and go on labouring as they do now, if they know that they are to have lands when the division takes place? Who will furnish the new possessors



with capital to work these lands? You know they must all have horses, carts, ploughs, harrows, barns, stables, and a hundred things besides. Do you not see, then, that a general division to accommodate all is absolutely impossible; and, as I said before, that only the cunning, the bold, and the wicked are likely to get anything, and that they must wade to it through blood?"

Mrs. Turner was still silent, but her husband again, and in stronger terms than before, declared his opinion, that the equalizing of property was quite out of all question; "And I believe now, Sir," he added, "that it is only the pretence of a few discontented and ruined men, to get *our* assistance to overturn everything, that they may have some pickings out of the wreck for themselves. They have no love for *us*, Sir, I dare say; their love is for their own bellies. You have opened my eyes, Sir; and I thank you for it. I will have nothing to do with any such schemes ever again." "You are in the right, Turner," I said; "and it is worth considering, if property were to change hands universally, how bad a thing it would be, in almost an infinite number of cases, for the welfare of the country itself. Is it not one of the greatest objects that the land should be as productive as possible?" He assented. "And what sort of people," I asked, "are most likely to manage it so as to raise the largest crops? The idle, the spend-thrifts, the drunkards, the gamblers; or the industrious, the frugal, the sober, the shunners of cards and dice?" His conscience seemed to prick him a little, whilst he confessed, that the latter were most likely to be the best farmers. "Then you think," I said, "that it would not be advisable

for the country to exchange these for the others?" He granted that it would not. "Do you know Mr. Markham of this parish?" I asked. "Oh! yes, Sir," he answered; "I know him very well; he employs *me* sometimes." "Did you ever hear," I asked again, "of his being in the habit of intoxicating himself at the alehouses, or of his drinking or gaming at home?" "Never, Sir," he replied; and it was evident by his tone, that he tacitly contrasted Mr. Markham's conduct with his own. "Well," I said, "and is he not always to be seen in his pew at church on a Sunday?" "I have heard," he answered, "that he never misses, and when I have been there I have seen him myself." "Tell me now then," I said, "what you know or have heard of his industry." "Why, Sir," he replied, "all the parish knows that there is nobody like him in *that* respect, and his sons are taking after him." "Then, I suppose, he is become rich?" I said. "Why, yes, Sir," he answered, "he is indeed. At first he laid out all his savings in bringing his farm into the most excellent order; and the other day he bought a part of it, as much as fifty acres, I believe, to be his own freehold for ever." "For ever, Turner," I said. "Yes, indeed, if your wise and sober statesmen at the Bull will see fit that it should be so. But, without doubt, Mr. Barking and the rest of them deserve to have the land more than Mr. Markham, and would make better occupants; and it is shameful that he should keep it from them." "Ah! Sir," replied Turner, apparently stung to the quick, "you are making game of me, Sir." "Well then," I said, "with all that self-love which is natural to every man, you would not think it just in itself, Turner, or profitable to the

country, that five acres should be taken from Mr. Markham, and given to *you*. He has obtained them by the sweat of his brow, by his superior agricultural skill, and by constant frugality, and by the exercise of the same virtues and qualities he will manage them most advantageously for the public interest. What claim have *you*, my good Turner, upon any of Mr. Markham's acres, or, to say the truth, upon any other man's ? ”

He was conscience-smitten, and made no attempt to reply to this : nor did his wife venture to interpose ; so I continued. “ Well, Turner ; and suppose that you yourself had acquired a little estate by hard labour and parsimony ; should you not think it cruel to have it taken away from your children, or grandchildren ? ” “ To be sure I should, Sir,” he replied eagerly enough. “ Or, if the estate had been given to you,” I said, “ as a reward for your services to the public, like that which was given to Lord Nelson ; would you not reckon it a great injustice, if it did not remain safe and secure to your most distant posterity ? ” “ I should indeed, Sir,” he answered with equal eagerness. “ And besides this,” I said, “ would it not discourage all industry, sobriety, and frugality ; virtues which are so useful to the country ; if it were uncertain, whether what was gained by them would be enjoyed by the descendants of those who practised them ; and, in short, whether their descendants might not be ousted by some drunken gambler, or by any other person of equally despicable character ? ”

“ Ah ! Sir,” cried Turner, very much troubled, and applying everything to himself, “ I hope you will say no more about it ; I am quite convinced,

Sir; and I will never be so wicked as to touch the property of another. Some rich men may make a bad use of their riches, for what I know; but, I dare say, their fathers or grandfathers got them honestly; and God knows whether I should use them better."

"But might not a part be taken away, Sir," interposed Mrs. Turner, "from those who have too much, and given to those who have nothing?" "No, no, no!" exclaimed her husband, interrupting her.

"Who shall decide what is too much? Who shall settle to which of the poor a gift of land shall be made? Suppose the king and the parliament to do this, and to appoint commissioners to rob people of their estates; would it not cause a general rebellion? No, no, no, wife; we must even be contented as we are." "Yes," I said, "so it is. It is clear enough, from the short consideration which we have given to the subject, that all such schemes must be unjust to a great number of persons; that they are most likely to be unprofitable to the public, and may not be profitable to a single individual; but, what determines the question is, that they are not feasible; or, if you could imagine them carried into effect by violence and force of arms, they would not last; God and nature, the passions, the talents, and the habits of different men, would soon overthrow them. Assure yourselves, therefore, that there cannot be a worse enemy to the poor, than one, who recommends to them anything else but industry, and sobriety, and frugality, and patience."

In this sentiment they both acquiesced, the husband by conviction of its truth, the wife by compulsion, because she was conscious that she could not overturn it. If he had been a sober man himself,

the husband would have acquiesced cordially ; as it was, however, the simple conviction, I hoped, might have a salutary effect upon his conduct. So far, I believe, both of them were improved by the conversation and events of the afternoon, that they never again admitted into their house any notorious work of sedition, or blasphemy. The flight of the political emissary with such a flimsy excuse ; and, still more, the flight and guilty perturbation of Mr. Barking, made an impression not easily to be erased. But I went away without being able to ascertain the precise effect which had been produced as to the great religious points at issue between us. It was now too late, and I was also too much fatigued to talk any longer, or to attempt to bring matters to some more decisive conclusion. They cannot be infidels, I thought with myself, whether they will walk in the ordinances of the Lord, or not. So I wished them a good evening, only requesting that they would seriously reflect upon all which had passed.

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§ 5.—*The Same.*

AFTER so remarkable a coincidence of circumstances as I have described in the last pages, nothing occurred for a long period, which was comparatively of any interest at all. I had carried them safely, in the manner above-mentioned, through the great and extraordinary temptations of the times, by which they had been assailed, and which so unfortunately obstructed my endeavours to do them good ; and at

first they were regular in their attendance at church, when these temptations had ceased ; but, by degrees, they became lukewarm about it, and at last they abandoned it altogether. The Sacrament they never once received there. How far I may myself be blameable for this result, must be left to the searcher of all hearts. It seems probable, certainly, as Mrs. Turner formerly told me with respect to her husband, that if I could have been constantly with them, and God had blessed my endeavours, I might have moulded them according to my will. But in so large a parish this was impossible ; nor could I always meet with them, as formerly during Turner's sickness, when I had leisure and inclination to visit them. They were now fully engaged in the business of their worldly callings, and I saw them more often on the roads than at their home, and could only give a word or two of admonition as I passed them. But, to confess the truth, I was somewhat wearied with striving against their various tendencies to apostatise from the good resolutions which I had prevailed upon them once and again to make ; and I was mortified at the same time, that I could never prevail upon them to adopt a practice, which alone appeared to me to be calculated to cure the inveterate diseases of their moral and religious state. I had taken great pains with this particular view, but without success. Scripture tells us never to be weary with well-doing, whether successful or not ; but, alas ! I became weary and faint in my mind, and relaxed my efforts ; and at length I left my patients to themselves, exchanging little more with them than the common salutations, which they received with downcast looks. And good reason had they to do so. They were

conscious that they were too like the fig-tree, which disappointed by its barrenness all the cares and toils of the husbandman; and they seemed to fear the same terrific sentence, 'Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?'

Thus things went on in this unsatisfactory manner, till, after a considerable interval, I began to observe the thickening symptoms of an impending calamity, and a greater uneasiness in both of them, when any accident threw them in my way. Sickness, at the least, was manifestly approaching them both with hasty strides and threatening appearances; and it brought to their recollection, no doubt with pain and anguish, the salutary advice which had been so often given by *me*, and disregarded by themselves. But I mention this as a consolation to the clergy, when they fear, that all their labours have been entirely thrown away by the relapse of their patients. This is probably never the case; the sting generally remains, although for a time not observed by those who have fixed it; and, should sickness or any other adversity bring the parties into fresh contact with each other, then the benefits of their former intercourse will be immediately perceived, and the facilities which it gives for making greater advances in the present emergency.

So it was in the case of Mr. and Mrs. Turner. To *me*, however, they made no application for spiritual help; remorse and shame, it seems, prevented them; and they dreaded my reproaches worse than the diseases under which they laboured. But they wanted the comforts of religion, and reconciliation to their offended God at any rate; so they sent for my curate. Thomas had given up the Bull; but he had

found another alehouse nearer at hand, not so disreputable as the Bull, nor frequented by men of such dangerous principles: where, however, it was equally possible for him to indulge his former habits of drunkenness. To these he had by little and little returned; his pale countenance marked the gradual decay of his health in consequence; and, in fact, the old disorder was now revived, and raging with violence, had confined him to his bed. Margaret, meanwhile—whether her constitution was now no longer stout enough to endure the usual fatigue and exposure to the night air and cold; or whether she drank more gin than before to support her failing strength, was breaking apace, compelled to relinquish the markets, and herself laid up in the same sick-chamber with her husband. In this situation my curate visited them, having been previously informed by *me* of all the remarkable features of the case.

But, to be short.—He found them both humble and penitent; he administered the Sacrament to them at their own desire; they recovered; that is, not to their former vigorous health, but to the power of pursuing their business, although with diminished activity, and with constitutions manifestly broken; they came again to church; and thus, once more, as there was no extraordinary difficulties now to be encountered and to intercept their course, there was a fairer prospect than ever that they might fulfil all my wishes. I marked their conduct, therefore, with an attentive eye; I spoke kindly to them, whenever I met them; I encouraged and exhorted them to persevere; but still they did not ratify their vows at the altar of their Lord and Saviour; this last important step was still to be taken, and, if intended, was still unaccountably delayed.



One afternoon, passing by their door at an hour when their work was generally at an end, I saw them both within ; and thinking that I might wait, perhaps, for a long time before another so favourable opportunity presented itself, I went in ; and a chair being offered me, I sat down at once. The shyness and uneasiness which this visit might have been likely to create in them, was partly done away by my having often already spoken to them on the roads ; and I endeavoured to expel what remained, by beginning my conversation with them in the following manner. They were standing to do me honour ; so I said courteously, "Sit down, my good friends ; and, if you are at leisure, we will have a little talk together, as we used to have formerly ; but not a word must be uttered about former things. They are past and gone ; we should lose time in reverting to them ; and our chief concern is with the present circumstances. I bear no ill-will towards you whatever, and I am very desirous to help you if I can. Sit down, I beg of you."

At first they hesitated to take their seats ; but, at length encouraged by my apparent kindness, and especially by my offer to bury all ancient grievances in oblivion, they sat down, and thanked me with much seeming cordiality ; still, however, there was a cloud upon their brows ; a sort of unpleasant apprehension as to the subjects which I might be about to discuss with them. I was determined, therefore, to let them know the worst at once, and I said, "My main business with you, good people, is to ask you whether you do not intend to take the Sacrament in the church at the next celebration of it." The husband was silent, and I concluded that

the difficulty was still with the wife. This woman perplexes me, I thought with myself. Is it an extraordinary awe and reverence for the Sacrament which keeps her from it; or slight and contempt of it; or carelessness and indifference? She would have persuaded me, if she could, that the first was her reason; for being aware that it was necessary for her to say something, she asked me, with much apparent humility and earnestness, whether I did not think, that a due reverence and awe of the thing might, unhappily, be diminished by a too frequent repetition of it. "Mrs. Turner," I answered, "you assume a fact not proved, that there may be a too frequent repetition of the Sacrament. There may be a frequent repetition of the Sacrament, undoubtedly; but that there may be a too frequent one, is not so clear; or, perhaps, if rightly considered, is scarcely possible. Tell me, however, what you would think a too frequent repetition of it. Would you think so of taking it monthly, and on the great festivals besides?" "*That*, I believe, Sir," she replied, "would be as often as it is possible to take the Sacrament in this parish." "It is true," I said; "but formerly it used to be administered every Sunday here in England; and in other countries, in the primitive times, it was administered every day; and what is more, we have good reason to conclude from Scripture that during the lives of the apostles every Christian partook of it. Indeed, for many ages after the apostles there was such a strong disposition in all Christians to partake of it, that they thought it impossible to do so too often. Their reverence, and piety, and gratitude, induced them to think, or rather to be quite certain, that they could not too often

renew the memorial of their blessed Lord, and of his sufferings and death for them; that they could not too often praise and extol him, as well as his heavenly Father, for the wonderful dispensation of mercy by the Gospel; that they could not too often repeat their vows of abiding by the Christian covenant, and of amending their lives; that they could not too often be pardoned for their sins, or receive fresh accessions of grace from the Holy Spirit; in short, that they could not too often enter into a communion of Christ's body and blood, without feeding upon which there would be no spiritual life in them. These were their sentiments, Mrs. Turner; and I do not imagine, that, whilst these sentiments animated the breasts of Christians, a due reverence and awe of the Sacrament was ever weakened or destroyed by the frequency of celebrating it. But what has all this to do with *you* and your husband, Mrs. Turner? You have never received this holy Sacrament but twice in your whole life, and both times privately; you have never once received it publicly, and in the proper place. You have not received it, therefore, either frequently, or too frequently; and I should suppose that, if you considered the matter at all, you would hardly affirm, that the receiving it once in church, after receiving it twice at home, will expose you to the danger of undervaluing it. At least it would be better for you to try the experiment of receiving it once publicly, and then to consider the effect of it. Indeed I fear that if you were to search your own heart as God searches it, you would find lurking there a very different reason for your reluctance to take the Sacrament in the church, than that which you have just insinuated to me. I suspect

very strongly that there is something or other in your affairs at variance with God's commands, which you cannot bring yourself to abandon, and which, therefore, be assured, whether you take the Sacrament or not, will be the cause of your eternal ruin. When you took the Sacrament on your sick-bed, you probably thought that you might never recover; and so it was then very easy for you to renounce all iniquity. But now you are come back to life, and the business of life, you are come back also, I fear, to all your ancient habits. These I wish you to break through, whilst you are in health; and not merely to renounce them when you are sick and likely to die; and I recommend to you the constant habit of receiving the Sacrament at the altar, not in the presence of God only, but of your fellow-creatures also, as the most probable means of inducing you to renew your good resolutions; to bind yourself to the performance of them; to obtain sufficient strength to do so; and thus, in the end, to save your soul. Ah! my poor Mrs. Turner," I continued mournfully, "it is but a mockery of God, and your Saviour, to fly to them when you are dying; to neglect them when they have heard your prayers, and restored your health. If sickness and the fear of death overtake you again, which must be the case, unless you are suddenly cut off at a single blow, will you fly to them again, and call for the heavenly food, and expect it to nourish your soul, and fit it for the heavenly dwelling? Will it be your passport thither, when thus taken, do you think?"

Here I stopped. I would have said much more, if the state of my two hearers had not rendered it

apparently unnecessary. That I was correct in my conjectures was but too evident. Mrs. Turner bore witness by her tears, which flowed profusely. Her husband, indeed, shed none, although he was prone to tears; but a deep dejection and despondency seemed to have taken possession of the whole man, and he hung down his head, as one that had no power to speak, and did not dare to think. My compassion was moved towards them; but, as St. Paul says to the Corinthians, I did not repent that I had made them sorry. The passage, beautiful as it is, flashed across my mind, and suggested to me the sentence, which I now pronounced, as I rose and left them. "If this sorrow of yours, my good friends, should lead you to a thorough repentance and change of life, I shall rejoice that I have made you sorry. For then you will have received no damage by *me*. Such a sorrow is a godly sorrow, and worketh salvation. God grant that your sorrow may be of this sort, and not the sorrow of the world, which worketh death, both temporal and eternal!"

Thus ended my communications with the Turners. After this I neither spoke to them nor saw them, I think, again. Two or three times, when I passed their house, I had noticed that the windows were closed; but I made no further observation upon the circumstance than that it prevented me from visiting them. At length it struck me that they were gone; and, on enquiry, I found that such was the fact; but whither, or for what purpose, was never satisfactorily explained to me by any one. They had relations in a distant town, and might possibly be removed there;

the reasons of their removal nobody pretended to understand; but I fancied to myself that I knew some of them, and the reader, perhaps, will entertain the same fancy. At all events the reader, as well as myself, will have no difficulty in foreseeing, and will foresee with pain, their probable career in their new settlement. But we commit them to a merciful God.

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